

THE CHRISTIANS OF THE JAZĪRA

17-132 A.H./638-750 A.D.

Presented by

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ABSTRACT

This Ph.D. thesis is a political, social and economic study of the Christians of the Jazīra during the period 17-132 A.H./638-750 A.D. More specifically doctrinal aspects are not dealt with here, since they have already received considerable attention from many scholars and researchers.

This subject was chosen mainly because the history of the Christians of the Jazīra in the early Islamic period has suffered from a lack of academic interest; this is in contrast to the history of the Jazīra before the rise of Islam which has been well researched and investigated.

This thesis is in six chapters:

Chapter One deals briefly with the Arab emigration into the Jazīra, the emergence of Christianity in the Jazīra and the Christians under the Sassanians and the Byzantines.

Chapter Two deals with the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra. It gives a general outline of the conquest of the Jazīra, discusses the Islamic and Christian sources which deal with the conquest, the peace treaties made with the Christians of the Jazīra, and how the Christians of the Jazīra tried to prevent the Muslims from conquering the Jazīra.

Chapter Three is devoted to the activities of the Banu Taghlib, the Arab Christian tribe, during the

period covered by this thesis, the taxes on the Banu Taghlib, their role in the first and second Islamic civil wars, and the nature of their Christianity.

Chapter Four is concerned with the relationship between the Church and the caliphate; the Christian leaders in the Jazīra, their activities, controversies in the Church, the decline of monasticism, the building of churches, icons, the relationship between the Muslim authorities and prominent Christian personalities and the attitudes of the Christians of the Jazīra to the Islamic civil wars.

Chapter Five deals with the economic role of the Christians of the Jazīra; agriculture and grazing, industry and trade, taxation, the reforms of 'Umar II, and the status of the peasantry in the Jazīra.

Chapter Six outlines the position of the Christians in Islamic society and deals with such topics as marriage between them and the Muslims. The chapter also discusses the Christians' dress and food and deals with their religious and property rights in Islamic society.

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I have followed the transliteration system of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., with two exceptions: "j" replaces "dj" and "q" replaces "k".

ABBREVIATIONSA. Sources

The following abbreviations have been used for the most frequently consulted works:

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| Ibn Ādam | Yahyā b. Ādam, (d. 203 A.H./818 A.D.), <u>Kitāb al-Kharāj</u> , ed. W. Juynboll, (Leiden, 1896). |
| Al-Akḥṭal | Ghayāth b. Ghawth, al-Akḥṭal (d. 92 A.H./710 A.D.), <u>Shi'r al-Akḥṭal</u> , ed. A. Ṣaliḥanī, (Beirut, 1891). |
| Ibn A'tham | Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān, (d. 314 A.H./926 A.D.), <u>Kitāb al-Futūḥ</u> , (Hyderabad, 1968). |
| <u>Ansāb</u> | Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yahyā, (d. 279 A.H./892 A.D.), <u>Ansāb al-Ashrāf</u> , (Jerusalem, 1936-1938). |
| Al-Balādhurī | <u>Futūḥ al-Buldān</u> , ed. M.J. de Goeje, (Leiden, 1968). |
| <u>Chronography</u> | Bar-Hebraeus, (d. 685 A.H./1286 A.D.) <u>The Chronography</u> , trans. W. Budge, (London, 1932). |
| Abu 'l-Faraj | Abu 'l-Faraj, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī, (d. 356 A.H./969 A.D.) <u>Kitāb al-Aghānī</u> , (Cairo, 1963). |

- Bar-Hebraeus Chronicon Ecclesiasticum, ed. and trans. J.B. Abbeloos and Th. J. Lamy, (Louvain, 1872-1877).
- Marī Marī b. Sulaymān, (d. 6 century A.H./ 12 century A.D.), Akhbār Faṭārikat Kursī al-Mashriq, (Rome, 1889).
- Ibn Mattī ‘Amr b. Mattī, (d. 7 century A.H./ 14 century A.D.), Akhbār Paṭārikat Kursī al-Mashriq, (Rome, 1896).
- Michael Michael the Syrian, (d. 596 A.H./ 1199 A.D.), Chronique de Michel Le Syrien, ed. J.B. Chabot, (Paris, 1899-1901).
- Al-Marjī Thomas al-Marjī, (d. 4 century A.H./ 10 century A.D.), Kitāb al-Rū’asā’, Arabic trans., A. Abuna, (Mosul, 1966).
- Ibn al-Qayyim Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Shams al-Dīn b. ‘Abd Allah (d. 751 A.H./ 1350 A.D.), Ahkām ahl al-Dhimma, ed. S. al-Ṣaliḥ, (Damascus, 1961).
- Qudāma Qudāma b. Ja’far, (d. 320 A.H./ 932 A.D.), Kitāb al-Kharāj, ed. and trans. A. Ben Shemesh, (London, 1965).
- Sa’rdī Unknown historian (d. 5 century A.H./ 11 century A.D.), Al-Tārīkh al-Sa’rdī, ed. A. Schīr, Patrologia Orientalis, (Paris, 1908-1918), under the following title: Histoire Nestorienne Inédite.

- Bar-Senaya Elia Bar-Senaya, (d. 438 A.H./1046 A.D.), Tārīkh Elia Bar-Senaya, Arabic trans. J. Happī, (Baghdad, 1975).
- Al-Shāfi'ī Muḥammad b. Idrīs, (d. 204 A.H./819 A.D.), Kitāb al-Umm, ed. M.Z. al-Najjār, (Būlāq, 1321-26 A.H.).
- Al-Ṭabarī Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr, (d. 310 A.H./923 A.D.), Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, ed. M.A.F. Ibrāhīm, (Cairo, 1960-69).
- Ibn al-Ṭayyib Abu 'l-Faraj 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ṭayyib, (d. 435 A.H./1043 A.D.), Fiqh al-Naṣrāniyya, (Louvain, 1956-7), 2 vols.
- Tell-Mahrē Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē, (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.), Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahrē, ed. J.B. Chabot, (Paris, 1895).
- Abū 'Ubayd Al-Qāsim b. Sallām, Abū 'Ubayd, (d. 224 A.H./836 A.D.), Kitāb al-Amwāl, ed. M.K. Harās, (Cairo, 1968).
- Al-Wāqidī Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, (d. 207 A.H./822 A.D.), Futūḥ al-Shām, ed. U. Abu 'l-Naṣr, (Beirut, 1966).
- Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm, Abū Yūsuf, (d. 182 A.H./798 A.D.), Kitāb al-Kharāj, (Būlāq, 1885).

B. Periodicals and Encyclopaedias

The following abbreviations have been adopted
for certain periodicals:

<u>CSCO</u>	<u>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium Parisiis.</u>
<u>JAOS</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society.</u>
<u>JRAS</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.</u>
<u>PO</u>	<u>Patrologia Orientalis.</u>
<u>EI</u> ¹	<u>The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st ed.</u>
<u>EI</u> ²	<u>The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed.</u>

SURVEY OF THE SOURCES

A. Islamic Sources

The main sources from which information on Christianity in the Jazīra in the period 17 A.H.-132 A.H./638 A.D.-750 A.D. can be derived are in general the well-known materials used for the study of medieval Islamic history. These sources will be treated in chronological order and described in terms of the contribution they make to research on Christianity in this period.

1. Al-Balādhurī (d. 279 A.H./892 A.D.)

A. Ansāb al-Ashrāf:- This book is not merely a genealogical and biographical record. Within the biographies of individual caliphs, it provides information on the relationship between the Muslims and Christians in the early Islamic period.

Al-Balādhurī uses isnād for most of his accounts. His main authorities include Ibn al-Kalbī¹ (d. 206 A.H./

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1. Though medieval Muslim biographical writers attacked Ibn al-Kalbī, they pronounced him to be an authority on Ansāb and the "Days of the Arabs". Cf. Dhahabī, Mizān al-I'tidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl, ed. A.M. al-Badawī, (Cairo, 1963), vol. 4, p. 304; Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Fihrist, (Cairo, n.d.), p. 139. The narratives of Ibn al-Kalbī are much briefer than those of other authorities.

821 A.D.), Abū 'Ubayda (d. 211 A.H./825 A.D.) and 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam¹ (d. 133 A.H./701 A.D.).

A comparison of this book with the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 A.H./844 A.D.) reveals that the socio-historical information which al-Balādhurī provides in Ansāb al-Ashrāf are quite unexpected in a book of biographies like this. It is true that Ibn Sa'd introduces a part of the history of the time in his biographies of individual caliphs but only as far as this history concerns them personally.²

B. Futūḥ al-Buldān:- The author produces what seems to be well documented details and he bases every item of information on an independent isnād. The work contains four accounts on the jizya and kharāj that were imposed on the Christians in the Jazīra.³

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1. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Awāna is a special authority on poetry and Ansāb and on the relationship between the Muslims and Christians but he was severely attacked for forging traditions in favour of the Umayyads (op. cit., p. 134).
 2. Cf. the introduction to the Ansāb, (Jerusalem, 1936), vol. 5, p. 14.
 3. Three of these four narratives are related with isnad. Cf. pp. 177-178, 152. The fourth begins merely with "It was said." To this al-Balādhurī adds the comments: "The fact is." Cf. p. 173.

In this work the beginnings of a critical judgement are discernible. Al-Balādhurī is not just a narrator and he is capable of weighing up one source against another.

2. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H./923 A.D.)

Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī:- He provides good information about the status of Christians in the Jazīra before Islam. Though his narratives about Christianity before Islam were related by Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī who was attacked by the Muslim scholars as an unreliable narrator, his narratives are similar to those related by Syriac sources. He may well, therefore, have had access to Syriac sources. In fact, a close comparison between al-Ṭabarī and certain Syriac sources which deal with the same events reveals on a number of occasions that the accounts are the same. The Syriac sources are often more detailed but the broad outlines of al-Ṭabarī's account appear to have been taken directly from the Syriac sources.¹ Al-Tha'ālibī follows the same line.²

A major difference between al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī

1. Cf. pp. 14-27 in this thesis.

2. Cf. his work Ghurār Akhbār Mulūk al-Furs, ed. H. Zotenberg, (Paris); cf. pp. 18-24 in this thesis.

is that al-Balādhurī relates many narratives in his Ansāb about the warfare between the Arab Christian tribe, Banu Taghlib, and the Muslim tribes in the Jazīra, while al-Ṭabarī neglects this subject entirely.¹ This warfare was so protracted and severe that it was the major distinguishing feature of the first century A.H., especially in the Jazīra.

Finally, al-Ṭabarī does not judge the narratives he uses.

3. Abu 'l-Faraj (d. 356 A.H./969 A.D.)

Kitāb al-Aghānī:- Abu 'l-Faraj is a historian, a man of letters and a poet. In his book al-Aghānī there is an abundance of information about the tribal war between the Christian Arab tribe Banu Taghlib, and the Muslim Arab tribes. He uses chains (isnād) to make the accounts which he cites appear acceptable as historical documents. He relates from al-Zubayr b. Bakkar (d. 256 A.H./869 A.D.), 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 262 A.H./875 A.D.) and al-Madā'inī (d. 225 A.H./840 A.D.). These three narrators are in turn dependent on the efforts of al-Aṣma'ī (d. 215 A.H./830 A.D.), Abū 'Ubayda (d. 211 A.H./825 A.D.), Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206 A.H./821 A.D.)

1. He, however, provides important detailed accounts of the tribal conflicts in Khurāsān and the eastern provinces.

and Ibn al-A'rābī¹ (d. 225 A.H./839 A.D.).

Abu 'l-Faraj is the only Muslim author who provides information about the relationship between the governors and the Christian personalities. Moreover, this information is very detailed. It is similar to that related by Christian sources. This indicates that either his narrators took their reports from the Christian sources or that both were taking their accounts from a common source.

In conclusion, this book may be judged as the most important Muslim source for information about the social aspects of the history of Muslims and Christians in the Near East up to the time of the author's death.

4. Al-Bakrī, Abū 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 487 A.H./1094 A.D.)

Mu'jam Mā ista'jama:-² The author was an expert on poetry, narratives and the Ansāb of the Arabs. He was also well-versed in tradition and Islamic law.³

1. L. Zolendek, "An Approach to the problem of the Sources of the Kitab al-Agānī" (Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago, 1960) vol. 19, p. 218. This journal is a continuation of the American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures.
2. Ed. M. al-Saqqā, (Cairo, 1945), vol. 1.
3. Cf. the introduction of the editor, pp. H-K.

Mu'jam Mā'ista'jama is a very important source on the emigration of the Arab tribes from the Arab Peninsula to the Jazīra. The author also describes in brief the fighting among the Arab tribes and their branches, and between these tribes and Persia.¹

The book contains seven general narratives about the Arab emigration to the Jazīra, four of which are related by Hishām b. al-Kalbī,² an acknowledged expert on the Ansāb of the Arabs and the "Days of the Arabs". Two of the remaining accounts are related by 'Umar b. Shabba,³ another expert in this field. The seventh account comes from Abū Alī al-Qālī.⁴

Finally, the author does not date his narratives but he relates some incidents that happened in Sassanian times. This helps to give approximate dates to the narratives. It is clear that he relates them in chronological order.

1. Pp. 25-75.

2. Pp. 67, 71, 75.

3. Pp. 25-26, 69.

4. P. 70. He was also considered by early scholars as reliable. Cf. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Irshād al-arīb ilā Ma'rifat al-adīb, ed. D. Margoliouth, (Cairo, 1925), vol. 7, pp. 52, 73, 309.

5. The Dīwāns of early Arab poets

These sources are very important because the authors of these Dīwāns were contemporary to the incidents which they describe. They dwell especially on the battles between the Muslims and Christian Arab tribes and the relationship between the governors and the Christians. These verses may be used profitably to corroborate or amplify the narratives found in different historical sources. These Dīwāns include the Dīwān of al-Akḥṭal (d. 92 A.H./710 A.D.) and the Dīwān of Jarīr (d. 114 A.H./732 A.D.) of which the more useful is the Dīwān of al-Akḥṭal because it provides detailed social, economic and political information.

6. Early works on Kharāj

The authors of these books lived in the early Islamic period so they were very close to the period being studied here. They employ the isnād method as was customary for more straightforward historical works. These sources provide an abundance of details on the social and economic history of the Christians under the caliphate. These sources also allot special chapters to the Arab Christians, especially Banu Taghlib. Amongst these books are: Kitāb al-Kharāj by Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 A.H./798 A.D.), Kitāb al-Kharāj by Yaḥyā b. Ādam (d. 203 A.H./818 A.D.), Kitāb al-Amwāl by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim (d. 224 A.H./838 A.D.) and Kitāb al-Kharāj by Qudāma b. Ja'far (d. 320 A.H./932 A.D.)

The first and the second of these books use the same narrators and provide similar accounts, whilst the third is the main source of the fourth.¹ The fourth of these works hardly uses isnād at all.

7. Early works of Fiqh

These sources reflect the points of view of the early fuqahā'. Some of them were written by fuqahā' contemporary with the era under study, so their opinions and information are very important because they reflect, or at least, purport to reflect the attitudes of the Muslims at that time. Such works relate a wealth of historical narratives supported by isnād.

These books include al-Majmū' al-Ṣafawī by Zayd b. 'Alī (d. 122 A.H./739 A.D.), al-Mudawwana al-Kubrā by Mālik b. Anas (d. 179 A.H./795 A.D.), Kitāb al-Umm by al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204 A.H./819 A.D.), the Musnad of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H./855 A.D.) and the Sunan of Abū Dā'ūd (d. 275 A.H./888 A.D.).

B. Christian Sources

Most of the Christian sources are written by the clergy, so they focus their attention more on religious

1. A. Ben Shemesh, Taxation in Islam, (London, 1965), vol. 2, p. 7.

rather than historical aspects. However, there is good historical data mixed in with religious information. Many of these books are written in Arabic while others are in Syriac or Greek.

The authors of these books quote many chapters from books left by their ancestors or they summarise and reorganise these books. Then they add incidents that take place in their own time or about which they have gleaned information from people contemporary to them. This approach may be noticed clearly in the relationship between the works of Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē, Michael the Syrian and Bar-Hebraeus. Dionysius' main sources on Christianity before Islam are: Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, the anonymous Chronicle of Edessa, the Ecclesiastical History of John of Asia, the Chronicle of Zachariah of Mitylene and the Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite.

Michael the Syrian quotes Dionysius, adding what he has heard himself or obtained in documents or from narrators. Moreover, Bar-Hebraeus quotes Michael and adds new incidents that have come to his attention.

Christian sources may be divided into three categories:

a. The Greek Sources

The Greek Ecclesiastical Histories which are available and translated into English date from the first six centuries of the Christian era. These Histories are:

Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History (to 324 A.D.,)
 Sozomen's Ecclesiastical History (324 A.D. to 440 A.D.),
 Theodoret's Ecclesiastical History (322 A.D. to 428 A.D.)
 and the Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius (431 A.D. to
 594 A.D.).

The above-mentioned Greek historians do not date their narratives precisely. Not surprisingly, they favour Byzantium in its struggle against Persia and consider the war against Persia as a holy one.

1. Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 339 A.D.)

The Ecclesiastical History:-¹ The author is the first Christian historian who recorded the succession of the sacred apostles from the foundation of the Church up to 339 A.D.²

Eusebius in fact is just a collector of facts and documents who does not try to judge his narratives, most of which are full of exaggeration, miracles and fables. This kind of writing is aimed at proselytising to show that Christianity succeeds by miracles.³

2. Sozomen: He was born at the beginning of the 5th century A.D.

Ecclesiastical History:-⁴ In relating the status

1. Translated by K. Lake, (London, 1926).

2. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 7.

3. Op. cit., pp. 85-97.

4. The London edition, 1846.

of the Christians in the Jazīra before Islam he fails to provide his own judgement on the case, and on many occasions he gives too many details which are irrelevant to the subject he discusses.¹

3. Theodoret (d. 450 A.D.)

Ecclesiastical History:-² In relating the history of the Christians in the Jazīra before Islam he shows that he was under the influence of his religion and he attributes every victory against Persia to the power of Christianity.³ Sometimes he relates miracles.⁴ On other occasions he tries to give his personal point of view.⁵

4. Evagrius (born in 536 A.D.)

Ecclesiastical History:-⁶ In relating the status of Christians in the Jazīra, he uses many historical sources whose titles and authors he mentions.⁷ He

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1. Pp. 59-68, 248-251, 275-276, 308-310.
 2. The London edition, 1844.
 3. Pp. 198-199.
 4. Pp. 198, 234.
 5. P. 343.
 6. The London edition, 1854.
 7. Pp. 201, 218-221.

attributes most of the incidents in those narratives to miracles.¹

The sole available Greek book which dates its narratives precisely is The Chronicle of Theophanes:

5. Theophanes (d. 202 A.H./817 A.D.)

The Chronicle of Theophanes:-² This chronicle must have been written in Syriac and translated into Greek.³ Mango doubts if the work was in fact written by Theophanes the Confessor. He suggests that it was written by the monk George who composed a most accurate Chronography from the creation to the Emperor Diocletian (d. 305 A.D.) and that at the end of his life he entrusted the work to Theophanes who was his friend so that he might complete it.⁴

The book is very fully informed about the Muslims, especially about events in Syria and Palestine and is unique in this respect among the Byzantine chroniclers. For the 7th and 8th centuries the author relies heavily

1. Pp. 221-222, 219-20, 306.

2. Bonn edition, 1839, vol. 1.

3. C. Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?" in Zbornic Padora, (Belgrade, 1978), vol. 18, pp. 13-17.

4. Ibid., pp. 10-17.

on a lost oriental source which was used directly or indirectly by Michael the Syrian.¹

The author shows a strong bias towards the Byzantines against the Muslims,² and he explains some events by miracles.³ He presents events in a way which shows the Christians often to be subjected to persecution from the Muslims.⁴ In spite of this obvious bias, the reader can gain valuable insights from this chronicle.

b. The Syriac Sources

The authors of the Syriac sources used here were men who played an important part in the affairs of their fellow-Christians in their own times. These sources focus especially on social aspects, the problems which faced the Christians as a religious minority under Muslim rule and the social and economic conditions of

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1. E.W. Brooks, "The Sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers", ed. in Byzantinische Zeitschrift, (Leipzig, 1900), vol. 13, p. 578.
 2. Cf. pp. 575, 613-614 from the book.
 3. Ibid., pp. 613-614.
 4. Ibid., pp. 575, 613-614, 521-522, 617-618.

the ordinary people.¹ In these chronicles there are many accounts which are critical of Islam. It may well be that the authors felt freer to write as they wanted in Syriac.

The following Syriac sources are of Mesopotamian origin, so they are considered as local sources for this thesis. These sources will be treated in chronological order.

1. The Chronicle of Joshua² (Author d. in the 6th century A.D.)

The book is devoted to the war between Persia and Byzantium that took place between 502 and 506 A.D. The author manages to draw on many earlier sources in writing this chronicle. He himself says that his information comes from old books to which he has had access, knowledge which he has secured by meeting men who acted as ambassadors to Persia and Byzantium, and from those who were present at important events.³ The

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1. J.B. Segal, "Syriac Chronicles as a Source Material for the History of Islamic People", History of the Middle East, ed. B. Lewis and P.M. Holt, (London, 1962), pp. 247-252.
 2. Translated into English by W. Wright, (Cambridge, 1882).
 3. P. 17.

chronicle is very rich in useful economic and social information.¹

2. Unknown historian (d. after 61 A.H./680 A.D.)

Al-Tārīkh al-Ṣaghīr:-² This book was probably written between 50-61 A.H./670-680 A.D. It contains narratives from the history of the Nestorian Church in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. Though the author is unknown, it is probable that he was a Nestorian³ because most of his work is about the Nestorian Church. He does not date his narratives but he simply says "At that time" or "In those days".⁴ The book provides some useful historical information.

3. John Bar-Penkayē (d. 1st century A.H./7th century A.D.)

The Chronicle of Bar-Penkayē:-⁵ The author was a monk who in his long life lived through both the change-over from Persian to Muslim rule and also the adoption of power by the Umayyads. His interpretation of history in

1. Pp. 27-28, 29, 30, 34, 41, 63.

2. Arabic ed. P. Haddad, (Baghdad, 1976).

3. Segal, op. cit., p. 252.

4. P. 104.

5. Ed. A. Mingana, Sources Syriaques, (Leipzig, 1908), vol. 1, pp. 1*-197*.

his book is one in which he sees every event as being part of God's overall plan for the world. Any misfortune which befell the Christians and the Muslims was a direct punishment from God for their sins.

Of particular relevance to the present study is the last chapter of the second part of his history, where he deals with the period between 7 to 69 A.H./ 628 to 688 A.D.¹

The author shows great bias to the Nestorians and attacks the Jacobites, accusing them of being "heretics".² This author is the only Christian author who states openly that the Nestorian Church was involved in the Islamic civil war,³ (64-68 A.H./683-687 A.D.). He emphasises in particularly emotional terms the decline in the quality of life for the Christians in the period immediately after this war, describing them as living in "darkness".⁴

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1. W.G. Young, Patriarch, Shah and Caliph, (Rawalpindi, 1974), p. 99; S.P. Brock, "Syriac Sources for Seventh Century History" (Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, (New Jersey, 1976), vol. 2, p. 24).
 2. Bar-Penkayē, op. cit., p. 175*.
 3. Ibid., p. 184*.
 4. Ibid., pp. 186*-191*.

4. Thomas al-Marjī (d. 4th century A.H./10th century A.D.)

Al-Ru'asā':- The author writes his book in a poetical style full of zeal and vitality. Thomas is not an expert on history. He is an ascetic and he aims his book to serve as a guide to the virtues of monasticism and asceticism. The book does not, however, lack historical value, even though the author relates many miracles.¹ He wants to make those men about whom he speaks act as models for others to follow, and he relates their biographies from this point of view.²

The book of al-Ru'asā' deals explicitly with monastic history until the middle of the 9th century A.D. It provides much insight into Church life in general and it may be counted among the chief sources of this thesis.

Thomas al-Marjī does not bother to date his historical narratives, with the exception of a few of them. He also does not give the location of the cities and the geographical places which he mentions, assuming no doubt that his reader will be acquainted with them anyway.

1. For example, pp. 184, 186-204, 304.

2. Pp. 16-18, 98-99.

5. Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.)

This well-known author studied history while he was a monk and then later in 211 A.H./816 A.D. he was consecrated as Jacobite Patriarch.¹ In the fourth part of his Chronicle² he deals with ^{the} Islamic history of the Jazīra. He begins every section with a broad title. His sources are such written documents as he could find, as well as information from the oral statements of old men and partly from his own observation.³ He gives much political, economic and social information.⁴

1. Segal, op. cit., p. 253.

2. Mar Ignatius Aphram I Barṣūma, the Patriarch of Antioch (d. 1957 A.D.), suggested that this work was not written by Dionysius but by a monk of the Monastery of Zuqanīn. According to Ignatius, Joseph Assemani in his Bibliotheca Orientalis wrongly attributed the Chronicle to Dionysius and other scholars have subsequently done the same. Ignatius does not, however, provide evidence to prove his point of view. Cf. his work, al-Lu'lu' al-Manthūr, (Baghdad, 1976), p. 129; cf. Segal, op. cit., p. 253.

3. W. Wright, A Short History of Syriac Literature, (London, 1894), p. 202.

4. For example, pp. 10, 92-5, 98, 123, 133-134, 137.

It is interesting to note that he interprets historical events according to Christian prophecies and he tries therefore to slant his narratives so that they correspond to earlier predictions. One can only agree with Segal when he describes this work as "a somewhat tedious narrative, full of lengthy quotations from Scripture, of apostrophes of Heaven against the wrongdoing of man, and of vapid moralizing."¹ In his narratives about the wars between the Muslims and the Byzantines he shows a strong bias towards Byzantium.²

Dionysius commits a serious error when he states that the first Muslim census of the population was made in the Jazīra in the reign of 'Abd al-Malik.³ All the earliest Islāmic sources⁴ and even Christian sources such as Theophanes⁵ and Bar-Hebraeus⁶ state that the first Muslim census was made in 18 A.H./639 A.D. in the reign of 'Umar I.

1. Op. cit., p. 253.

2. Pp. 12-15.

3. P. 10.

4. Abū Yūsuf, p. 21; al-Balādhurī, p. 266; Ibn Ādam, p. 27; cf. chapter 5, pp. 232-233 in this thesis.

5. Op. cit., p. 522 (A.M. 6131).

6. The Chronography, p. 96.

6. Yashū' Danha (d. in the 3rd century A.H./9th century A.D.) The author was Metropolitan of Basra.

Al-Daywara fī Mamlakatay al-Furs wa'l-'Arab:-¹

In his book he writes well-documented biographies of 140 saints and priests who built many monasteries in Mesopotamia before and after Islam and provides important insights into monastic life in this period. He also gives biographies of some secular pious men and women who built many schools and monasteries.² It is clear that in Yashū' Danha his desire to be an historian prevails over his priestly interests.³

The great difference between this author and Thomas al-Marjī is that the latter is first and foremost a churchman, even when writing history. He wants to stress the benefits of monasticism and asceticism in his work. Yashū' Danha does not date his statements as was the custom for the historian of that time. He merely gives the order in which priests succeeded one another.

It should be added, however, that neither of them have much of a critical approach. Both of them are no more than an uncritical medley of fact and pious fiction.⁴

1. The Arabic ed., ed. L. Cheikho, (Mosul, 1939).

2. Pp. 28, 30, 56-57, 60, 62, 67.

3. See the introduction of the translator of the book of al-Ru'asā', p. 9.

4. Segal, op. cit., p. 252.

7. Unknown HistorianThe Syriac Chronicle of the Year 232 A.H./846 A.D.:¹

This chronicle extends from 574 to 846 A.D. The third part of this source is relevant to this thesis. This part deals with the period between 60-232 A.H./679-846 A.D. It is in three sections; the first section deals with Islamic history from 60-110 A.H./679-728 A.D.; the second section deals with ecclesiastical history from 116-173 A.H./734-789 A.D., while the last section is merely a list of caliphs and Jacobite Patriarchs from 168-232 A.H./784-846 A.D.²

The sources of this book are generally the same as those used by Theophanes, Tell-Mahrē and Michael,³ but he provides certain very important narratives not mentioned by any of them nor any other source.⁴ In spite of his bias towards Byzantium in his description of the wars between the Muslims and the Byzantines, he praises 'Umar II,⁵ unlike Theophanes and Tell-Mahrē who

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1. Ed. E.W. Brooks (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, (Leipzig, 1897), vol. 51, pp. 569-587.
 2. Ibid., p. 570.
 3. Ibid., pp. 569-570; E.W. Brooks, "The Sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers", p. 581.
 4. Cf. pp. 582, 583, 584 in this source.
 5. P. 583.

attack 'Umar II because of his involvement in the war against Byzantium.

8. Elia Bar-Senaya (d. 438 A.H./1046 A.D.)

Tārīkh Elia Bar-Senaya:-¹ The author was the Metropolitan of Naṣībīn and he wrote many books. In his Tārīkh the author depends on many sources in different languages such as Greek, Syriac and Arabic, in addition to the Bible. Most of his sources are no longer available, such as lists of the kings of al-Ruhā, the kings of Persia, and the Metropolitans of Naṣībīn. The sources that he uses for the Islamic period and which are extant are works of Yashū' Danhā, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī, Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī and the Chronicle of Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē.

This wide range of sources used by Elia shows that he is attempting to produce a good balanced piece of historical work. His method of writing history is to mention his sources first and then to present the account, which is given without any critical comment. Segal describes this source by saying, "This, however, is little more than a bare list of events and dates."²

Though the author is a Nestorian, he often refers to the history of the Jacobites, besides providing much information on Islamic history. It is difficult to

1. For full bibliographical details, cf. p. vi.

2. Op. cit., p. 252.

discern any marked prejudices in his work. He does not appear to favour any religion or sect.

9. Michael the Syrian (d. 596 A.H./1199 A.D.)

The Chronicle of Michael the Syrian:¹ The author was a Patriarch of Antioch from 1166 A.D. to 1199 A.D. This book is a universal history from the Creation up until 1193 A.D.

The author acknowledges his debt to many earlier historians. Most of these sources are no longer available. These include the History of Africanus, the History of John Litarba, and the History of Sham'aun the Naṣibian. The latter covers the period between the 6-10th centuries A.D. There are, however, other chronicles used by Michael which are extant, such as the Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, the Chronological Canon of James of Edessa, the Chronicle of Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē and the Chronicle of Theophanes. Besides these, he has access to official documents and histories in Arabic.²

1. For full bibliographical details, cf. p. v.

The whole work has been translated into French by V. Langlois under the title: The Chronicle of Michael the Grand, (Venice, 1868). Both editions will be used. The Mss. pages will be mentioned in this work.

2. Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 395. Brooks, op. cit., pp. 578, 581, 583, 586; Brock, op. cit., pp. 21-2.

The Chronicle is set out in three columns; one deals with secular events, a second with religious affairs, the third contains miscellaneous stories and events.¹ The work is still the principal source of information about the relationship between the caliphate and the Christians, and more especially the Jacobites. Many details he includes are not found in Bar-Hebraeus.

In his treatment of the relationship between the Muslims and the Christians, Michael the Syrian shows little bias towards any side, but he provides information which reveals the hatred of the Jacobites for the Malkites, the official sect of Byzantium. Segal describes this source by saying, "His Chronicle is frequently a platform for doctrinal argument, but, for all of this, it is invaluable."²

10. Bar-Hebraeus (d. 685 A.H./1286 A.D.)

He was the Maphrian of the Jacobites from 663 to 685 A.H./1264-1286 A.D. He devoted himself from his boyhood to the acquisition of a knowledge of Greek and Arabic. A little later, he applied himself also to

1. Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 395; cf. Segal, op. cit., p. 255.

2. Op. cit., p. 255.

theology and philosophy besides practising medicine.¹ But the historical writings of Bar-Hebraeus are more famous than his works in other fields. These historical works are:

i. The Chronicon Ecclesiasticum:² This book deals both with the Monophysite Patriarchs and the Nestorian Patriarchs and also describes the life and the works of the Metropolitans of the Jacobites. The book is written in the style of a chronicle.

Although the Jacobites were proud of his intellectual abilities,³ his narratives should be viewed with considerable caution. Being a convert to the Jacobites from the Nestorians, he uses his knowledge to criticise the adherents of his former sect. His work contains much exaggeration, and many miraculous elements are used to support his sectarian viewpoint. Nevertheless, the Ecclesiastical History is a source of information on the history of Christianity which is not available in other sources.

ii. The Chronography:⁴ In this work the author

1. Wright, op. cit., p. 266.

2. For full bibliographical details, cf. p. v.

3. Cf. Barṣūm, op. cit., pp. 411-430; Brock, op. cit., p. 23.

4. For full bibliographical details, cf. p. iv.

Towards the end of his life he wrote the Mukhtaṣar /

deals with non-ecclesiastical matters. In relating these events he claims to draw on Michael the Syrian, Jacob the Edessan and many books in Arabic and Persian.¹ The work provides much information on the relationship between the Christians and the Muslims, as well as details on natural disasters such as famines, pestilence, severe weather and floods in the Jazīra. He may have quoted this information on natural disasters from Michael the Syrian because the former relates the same details.²

In general, the reader is struck by the fact that when they deal with the same period, Bar-Hebraeus and Michael the Syrian complement each other. Bar-Hebraeus completes the history of the period between the death of Michael the Syrian and his own times. Although Bar-Hebraeus writes his work six centuries after the period being studied here, his work is an invaluable source.

/Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh al-Duwal at the request of some Muslims, a shorter edition in Arabic of his Profane History, originally written in Syriac. In it the author does not attack Islam as he does when writing in Syriac, and he includes some new material. Ed. A. Ṣaliḥanī, (Beirut, 1958).

1. Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 425; Brock, op. cit., p. 23.
2. Cf. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 451, 456, 466.

c. Arabic Sources1. Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 435 A.H./1043 A.D.)

Fiqh al-Naṣrāniyya¹ The book contains a number of decisions and edicts in chronological order from many of the Christian Synodicons, from the first Synod of the apostles onwards. It also contains Christian laws on different subjects. This work is of great importance for a study of the relationship between the Christians and the Muslims. It would, however, be unwise to place too much reliance on judicial decisions such as these for information on Christian society. On the whole, the majority of these decisions are merely canonical in nature and represent an ideal rather than a real state of affairs.²

2. Unknown Historian (d. 5th century A.H./11th century A.D.)

Al-Tārīkh al-Sa'rdī:-³ This book was written in 411 A.H./1020 A.D. The author's sources are now lost. These include The Ecclesiastical History of Daniel Bar-Mariam, written

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1. For full bibliographical details, cf. p. vi.
 2. Cf. the introduction of Nestorian Questions on the Eucharist, ed. W.C. Van Unnik, (Haarlem, n.d.), p. 20.
 3. For full bibliographical details, cf. p. v.

in the 7th century A.D. and The Ecclesiastical History of Bar-Sahdī.

The extant part of this book covers the history of the period between 25 A.D. and 650 A.D. excluding the years 422 A.D. to 482 A.D. The work is similar to that of Marī b. Sulaymān which will be discussed below, probably because they both used the same sources. Clearly, the natural language of the author was not Arabic and the work contains many Aramaic technical terms.

The author provides very important information on the status of the Christians of the Jazīra under the rule of Sassanian Persia and on the Jacobite see in Tikrīt in Islamic times. It would appear that the author does not show marked bias towards any side in his work.

3. Marī b. Sulaymān (d. 6th century A.H./13th century A.D.) and 'Amr b. Mattī of Ṭirhān (d. 7th century A.H./14th century A.D.)

These authors wrote two books under the same title of Akhbār Paṭārikat Kursī al-Mashriq Min al-Majdal.¹

These books provide lists of the Patriarchs of the Nestorian Church from its beginning up to their own time. For each Patriarch they supply a short biography

1. For full bibliographical details cf. p. v.

in fairly general terms. Their works contain some information not found elsewhere, but they are written in an elliptical style, leaving much unsaid.

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This has been a general survey of some of the most useful sources for the study. However, in the chapter on the conquest of the Jazīra, these and other sources will be studied in more particular detail with the conquest of the Jazīra as the focal point. In addition there will be an assessment of the documents presented in these sources.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

THE JAZĪRA IN PRE-ISLAMIC TIMES

I. The geography of the Jazīra

The Muslims traditionally divided Mesopotamia into two provinces. The first was Iraq (Al-Sawād) in the south. The second was the northern half of Mesopotamia (Al-Jazīra), the great plain which lies between the Tigris and the Euphrates. It stretches from the sources of these two rivers in the north to its southernmost limit at Anbār on the Euphrates and Tikrīt on the Tigris. There were numerous cities and villages on the eastern bank of the Tigris and the western bank of the Euphrates; these formed part of the Jazīra.¹

Al-Muqaddasī gives the Jazīra the title Āqūr, the meaning of which is not clear. Maybe this was the contemporary name for the Jazīra.²

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1. Ibn Ḥawqal (d. 367 A.H.), Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Ard, (Beirut, n.d.), p. 189; al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. 4 century A.H.), Al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik, ed. M.J. 'Abd al-'Āl, (Cairo, 1961) p. 52; Abu 'l-Fidā', Taqwīm al-Buldān, (Paris, 1840), p. 273.

There was an island north of Mosul, Jazīrat b. 'Umar. It was named thus to differentiate it from the Jazīra proper. It was an island on the Tigris and it looked like a crescent. Cf. G. Le Strange, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, (Cambridge, 1930), p. 93.

2. Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm Fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm, (Leiden, 1909), p. 136.

The Jazīra was very fertile. Rainfall and the water of the two rivers were the main sources of irrigation.¹ It was one of the first areas to which the Arabs from the peninsula emigrated in the pre-Islamic period. A strong liking for this area is revealed in the work of 'Amr b. Kalthūm al-Taghlibī in the sixth century A.D.²

The Arab tribes divided the Jazīra into three districts called Diyār, to which each tribe subsequently gave its name, with the rivers forming the natural borders separating these three districts.³ These districts are:

1. Diyār Bakr, which was an extensive area of land which stretched from the sources of the Tigris in the north to the large curve in the river below Tall Fāfān, in the south, with the land northward traversed by the numerous affluents of the Tigris which join its left bank west of Tall Fāfān.⁴

1. More information on this will be given in chapter five.

2. Al-Tabrīzī (d. 502 A.H.), Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-'Ashara, ed. C.J. Lyall, (Calcutta, 1894), pp. 112-135.

3. Le Strange, op. cit., p. 87;

al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 137;

Ibn Khurradādhbih (d. 300 A.H.), Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik, (Leiden, 1889), p. 175; Ibn Rusta

(d. 310 A.H.) al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa, (Leiden, 1891), p. 90.

4. Le Strange, op. cit., p. 87.

Āmid on the upper course of the Tigris was the chief city of this district.

2. Diyār Muḍar. This area was to the southwest of Diyār Bakr. It consisted of all the plains watered by the river al-Bālīkh, a tributary of the Euphrates which flows from 'Ayn al-Dhibbāna¹ at Ḥarrān. The chief city of this district was al-Raqqā.
3. Diyār Rabī'a. This consisted of the Khābūr area which stretched from Ra's al-'Ayn. Its water supply came from the river al-Hirmās, which flowed into the Euphrates at Qarqīsiyā. The area included the land on both sides of the Tigris from Tall Fāfān to Tikrīt, which was a plain watered by al-Zāban and al-Khābūr. Mosul was the chief town of the district.²

II. Arab emigration to the Jazīra

Archaeological sources say that after the downfall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., Arab tribes began their

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1. Ibn Rusta, op. cit., p. 90; Ibn Khurradādhbih, op. cit., p. 175; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Mu'jam al-Buldān, (Leiden, 1867), vol. 2, p. 636.
 2. Ibid. Le Strange, op. cit., p. 87; Ibn Rusta, op. cit., p. 90.

emigration to the Jazīra.¹ Thereafter they managed to establish a state in Hatra.² According to al-Ṭabarī the rulers of this state were from Quḍā'a.³ Medieval Arabic sources provide much information on Hatra and its governors.⁴

It is not appropriate here to discuss the complex factors which caused successive tribal movements from the Arabian peninsula into the Jazīra. It is certainly unlikely to have been as simplified as early Arabic sources imply. According to such sources there were three major emigrations into the Jazīra. The first emigration took place in the third century A.D. because of severe fighting between the tribes of Iyād, Rabī'a and Muḍar. This caused a section of Iyād to leave the

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1. F. Safar, Hatra the City of the Sun, (Baghdad, n.d.), pp. 17-20; S. Ṣāyigh, Hatra, (Baghdad, n.d.), p. 166.
 2. Ṣāyigh, op. cit., p. 166; Safar, op. cit., p. 22. For more detail see F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, Die Araber in der alten Welt, (Berlin, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 191-224.
 3. Vol. 2, p. 47. Cf. Ibn al-Faqīh (d. 289 A.H.), Kitāb al-Buldān, (Leiden 1302 A.H.), p. 130.
 4. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, pp. 47-50; Ibn al-Faqīh, op. cit., p. 130; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 281-4; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 2, pp. 140-144.

Tihāma Plain to settle in Tikrīt, whilst other groups left for the Jazīra and the Mosul area¹ where they found their relatives from Bakr b. Wā'il had settled already.²

A second emigration took place in the 5th century A.D. when Taghlib, a branch of Rabī'a, left the Tihāma Plain because of their conflict with Bakr (ḥarb al-Basūs) in which Bakr emerged victorious. Other tribes of Rabī'a emigrated to different places. For example, al-Namr and Ghufīla went to 'Āna and the outskirts of the Jazīra, whilst Bakr, 'Anza and Ḍubay'a went to the outskirts of al-Sawād of Iraq and Hīt and the area around it.³ But probably Taghlib was the first branch of Rabī'a who emigrated to different places in the Jazīra,⁴ namely Sinjār and Naṣībīn⁵ which were situated in Diyār Rabī'a.

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1. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., pp. 69, 70-71; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 57; al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab, ed. Y.A. Daghr, (Beirut, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 279, 284; idem, al-Tanbīh wa'l-Ishrāf, (Leiden, 1894), p. 205; al-Tha'ālibī, op. cit., pp. 518-520.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 57.
 3. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 86; al-Wāqidī (d. 207 A.H.) Ḥarb Bakr wa Taghlib, (Cairo, 1305 A.H.), pp. 88-89.
 4. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 57; EI¹ supplement, (art. Rabī'a and Muḍar).
 5. J.M. Fiey, "Tagrīt", in L'Orient Syrien, (1963), viii, p. 296.

Some time after that, a third emigration began when fighting broke out between the different tribes of Muḍar such as al-Namr, Iyād, Qushaym, Tamīm and Salīm.¹

The most important Arab tribal groupings in the Jazīra for this research are Taghlib, al-Namr and Iyād.

Some groups of Taghlib had settled in the Jazīra before the reign of Shahpur II² (309-379 A.D.). Larger numbers of the tribe, however, moved there after the Basūs war. They chose such places as Naṣībīn, Arzūn, Barqa'īd, Jabal al-Shurāt, Sinjār,³ Tikrīt,⁴ 'Āna,⁵ Maksīn, Ra's al-'Ayn⁶ and Jazīrat b. Umar. The latter was founded by al-Ḥasan b. 'Umar of the tribe of Taghlib.⁷ Taghlib embraced Jacobite Christianity after they had come under Jacobite influence centred

1. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., pp. 80-84.

2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 57; al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj, vol. 1, p. 279; idem, al-Tanbīh, p. 205; al-Tha'ālibī, op. cit., pp. 519-20.

3. Al-Qalqashandī, Qal'id al-Jumān, (Cairo, 1963), p. 132. Cf. al-Ya'qūbī, Kitāb al-Buldān, (Najaf, n.d.), p. 113.

4. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., pp. 69-71.

5. Marī, p. 61. Bar-Hebraeus, Mafārinat al-Siryān, in The Journal of al-Mashriq, (Beirut, 1924), vol. 22, p. 366; al-Sa'rdī, vol. 2, (PO, vol. 13), p. 543.

6. Al-Qalqashandī, Nihāyat al-Arab, ed. A. al-Khāqānī, (Baghdad, 1958), p. 74.

7. Le Strange, op. cit., p. 93.

in Tikrīt.¹ In any case, they were probably not willing to adopt the Nestorian form of Christianity professed by their enemy, the Lakhmids.²

As for the Namr tribe, they settled in the district on the right bank of the Euphrates.³ They were associated like Taghlib with Jacobite Christianity. The town of 'Āna on the Euphrates is mentioned in 8 A.H./ 629 A.D. as the seat of the Jacobite bishop serving branches of the Namr, Taghlib and Iyād tribes that lived west of the river.⁴

Iyād b. Nizār moved to the Jazīra in the 4th century A.D.⁵ They chose the lower course of the

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1. Histoire de Saint Mar Ahoudemmeh, ed. F. Nau, in PO, (Paris, 1909), vol. 3, pp. 21-22; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 102.
 2. John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints, trans. E.W. Brooks, in PO, (Paris, 1924), vol. 18, pp. 196-197; al-Tabrīzī, op. cit., p. 112; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 5, pp. 37-69; vol. 11, pp. 47-49.
 3. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 86.
 4. J.M. Fiey, Assyrie Chrétienne, (Beirut, 1968), vol. 3, p. 239; J.S. Trimingham, Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times, (London, 1979), p. 176.
 5. Al-Mas'ūdī, op. cit., p. 205; idem, Murūj, vol. 1, pp. 279, 284; al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 24; al-Tha'ālibī, op. cit., p. 518.

Euphrates and their centre was 'Ayn Abāgh.¹ There was also a large section of this tribe settled in the villages and towns along the river Euphrates.² Anbār was their religious centre³ and they too fell under Jacobite influence.⁴

Overall authority in the Jazīra in the period immediately preceding Islam was divided between Byzantium and Sassanian Persia. According to Abū Yūsuf the situation was as follows:

"Ra's al-'Ayn and the country on this side of it, as far as the Euphrates, belonged to the Romans (Byzantium); Naşibīn and the country beyond it, as far as the Tigris, belonged to the Persians. The plain of Mārdīn and Dārā, as far as Sinjār and the desert, was Persian; the mountains of Mārdīn, Dārā and Ṭūr 'Abdīn, were Roman."⁵

Abū Yūsuf also refers to a fort belonging to Byzantium between Dārā and Naşibīn. Since it was used as an observation post it is likely that it was situated on the frontier.⁶ There is also a mention of

1. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 69; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 74.

2. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 69.

3. Trimingham, op. cit., p.177.

4. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 75.

5,6. P.23.

Dayr al-Qā'im which was a lofty observation post (marqab) on the frontier between Persia and Byzantium.¹ The border between the two great empires shifted regularly. In the reign of Ishū'-yāb, the Nestorian Patriarch (582-604 A.D.), 'Āna and Naṣībīn formed the borders.²

III. The coming of Christianity to the Jazīra

The earliest eastern Christian historians³ believed that Christianity was brought to the Jazīra in the first century after Christ. In this connection reference should be made to a letter purporting to come from Abgar the king of Edessa to Jesus telling him that he would protect him if he came to Edessa. Jesus replied to that letter.⁴ This alleged correspondence between Christ and Abgar would appear a forgery, dating probably from the third century.⁵

Bardaiṣan, writing about 196 A.D., refers to

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1. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 591; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 684.
 2. Al-Sa'rdī, vol. 2, (PO, vol. 13), p. 439.
 3. These historians will be discussed in detail later on.
 4. Eusebius, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 87-91.
 5. This correspondence will be studied in detail in the appendix.

revolting idolatrous customs in Edessa, and adds:

"When King Abgar had come to the faith,
he ordered that every man who emasculated
himself should have his hand chopped off.
And from that day to this no one emasculates
himself in the territory of Edessa."¹

According to Eusebius, the disciple Thomas was
divinely moved to send Addaeus to Edessa as a herald
and evangelist of the teaching concerning Christ. When
Addaeus reached the city, he healed Abgar by the word
of Christ and amazed all the inhabitants by his strange
miracles. "From that day to this the whole city of
Edessa has been dedicated to the name of Christ, thus
displaying no common proof of the beneficence of our
saviour to them."²

According to the Doctrine of Addaeus, which was
written at the beginning of the fifth century A.D.,³
Abgar converted to Christianity with a large number
of his subjects. Addaeus built a church in Edessa⁴ and

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1. The Book of the Laws of Countries, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers,
(Essen, 1965), p. 59.
 2. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 107. The form Addaeus will be
used in this thesis, instead of Thaddaeus and Addī.
 3. In the Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical
Record, (London, 1858), vol. 7, p. 430.
 4. W. Cureton, Ancient Syriac Documents, (London, 1864),
p. 13; Solomon al-Baṣrī, The Book of the Bee, trans.
W. Budge, (Oxford, 1886), p. 109.

built churches in other villages, both far and near, and completed and adorned them, established in them deacons and presbyters and taught persons to read the Scriptures in the churches.¹ The source adds:

"Neither did King Abgar nor the Apostle Addaeus compel any man by force to believe in Christ."²

Some years after the death of Abgar, his unbelieving son sent people to break the legs of Addaeus as he was sitting in the church. Addaeus died on this occasion.³ With the death of this man, however, Christianity did not stop spreading in the Jazīra.⁴

It is not unlikely that Addaeus was at Edessa in the reign of Abgar. It is generally believed that the holy Apostles and disciples of Christ were scattered to different countries to preach the Gospel: Thomas to Parthia, Andrew to Scythia, John to Asia,⁵ and so on. Syriac manuscripts other than the Doctrine of Addaeus relate that Addaeus was preaching in the area of Edessa and the Jazīra. Such manuscripts include "A chapter

1. Cureton, op. cit., pp. 13, 18.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. Ibid., pp. 22-23. Solomon al-Baṣrī, op. cit., p. 109.

4. Cureton, op. cit., p. 23.

5. Eusebius, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 191.

from the teaching of Apostle Addaeus in Edessa"¹ and "Addaeus in Edessa".² This would tend to suggest that Christianity had reached Edessa sometime in the first century A.D.

As regards the Jazīra generally, Marī b. Sulaymān³ and 'Amr b. Mattī⁴ say that Christianity was brought to the eastern cities in the Jazīra in the first half of the first century by Addaeus and his student Aggī.

Corroboratory evidence is provided in the Chronicle of Edessa which states that in 202 A.D. there was a great flood that destroyed the church of the Christians.⁵

This indicates that Christianity was there before that date. Moreover, Bar-Senaya states that Abraham the Nestorian Catholicos died in the Jazīra before the Persian kingdom⁶ (i.e. before 226 A.D.).

1. A. Mingana, Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts, (Cambridge, 1933), vol. 1, p. 726.

2. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 180.

3. P. 3.

4. P. 1.

5. Unknown historian, (d. 6th century A.D.) in the Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record, (London, 1864), vol. 5, p. 31.

6. P. 64. Michael the Syrian published a list of the bishops of Edessa from the middle of the first century until the third century, (Paris, 1905), vol. 3, pp. 493-494. Cf. Solomon al-Baṣrī, op. cit., /

Another important source in this respect is Asāqifat Hadiyāb,¹ which mentions Mar Faqīda the first bishop of Hadiyāb who held the office for ten years (104-114 A.D.). He was converted by Addaeus in 99 A.D., and began preaching Christianity in many parts of Hadiyāb. It may be inferred therefore that after the year 99 A.D. the Christian faith appeared in Hadiyāb. According to the same source, it spread not only in the bigger centres but also in the villages.²

The above evidence supports the hypothesis that Edessa was among the earliest places in the Jazīra where Christianity took hold. It is probable that the Christian Faith was established in the Jazīra some time before the end of the first century A.D.

/op. cit., p. 116. Bar-Hebraeus states that in 11 A.D. St. Thomas visited Tikrīt on his way to India. In Tikrīt he managed to convert Hadbšabba, his family and many inhabitants of the city to Christianity. Op. cit., p. 190.

1. Hadiyāb corresponds roughly to the area of modern Irbil.
2. The author was Mshikha Zakhā (d. in the 6th century A.D.); Asāqifat Hadiyāb, in the Journal of al-Mashriq, (Beirut, 1924), vol. 22, p. 184.

IV. Christianity among the Arab tribes in the Jazīra
in pre-Islamic times

According to Sozomen, the Arab tribes were attracted to the Christian faith through their contacts with the monks who lived near them, who charmed them by their extraordinary life and their thaumaturgic reputation.¹

The sources available at present do not mention with certainty any date for the spreading of Christianity among the Arabs in the Jazīra. According to one original Christian source, the Christian faith spread to Hatra in the first century A.D. Bardaisan states:

"... Those who live in Hatra do not stone thieves. But in whatever place they are and wherever they may find themselves, the local laws cannot force them to give up the Law of their Messiah."²

If this account is true, the Arab tribes of Hatra were probably Christians in the first century A.D.

Al-Mas'ūdī states that 'Amr b. 'Udaī the king of Hīra, who ruled between 272 A.D. and 300 A.D., was a

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1. Op. cit., pp. 54-55; cf. Zachariah of Mitylene, The Chronicle of Zachariah, trans. F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, (London, 1899), p. 210.
 2. Op. cit., p. 61.

Christian.¹ If this account is true the Arab tribes in the Jazīra were probably Christians before that, because the introduction of Christianity to the Persian world came from the Jazīra.² Al-Ṭabarī states that the Arab tribes sided with the Christian Byzantine Emperor Constantine (309 A.D. to 337 A.D.) in his war against Shahpur II, the Persian king.³ Banu Iyād built many churches before the reign of Shahpur II⁴ and in their war against him called themselves 'ibād Allah.⁵ These statements suggest that they were Christians in the third century A.D.

As mentioned before, the Jazīra was divided into tribal groups. In the area of these Christian tribes many monasteries (Diyārāt) were built. For example

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1. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 66. Al-Ṭabarī, however, states that his son was the first Christian in his family; vol. 2, p. 53.
 2. Sozomen, op. cit., p. 59; A. Moberg, The Book of the Himyarites, (London, 1924), p. 1.
 3. Vol. 2, pp. 58-59. The Arab tribes of Taghlib and Bakr Ibn Wail were so dangerous to the Sassanians that Shahpur II sent them away to the Arabian Gulf and other places. See al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 57; al-Mas'ūdī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 284.
 4. Ibn al-Shajarī, Mukhtārāt Shu'arā' al-'Arab, ed. A.M. al-Bajāwī, (Cairo, 1975), p. 3.
 5. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., p. 24.

Banu Iyād built Dayr al-A'war, Dayr al-Jamājim and Dayr Qurra.¹ Taghlib built Dayr Mar-Sirjis.² These monasteries were built in different places in the Jazīra; in the cities, villages, on the trade routes and near the sources of water.³ Sometimes, the Christian Arab tribes worshipped in tent churches.⁴

Banu Taghlib went so far as to inscribe the image of Mar-Sirjis on their banners which they took into battle with them.⁵ This practice continued into the Islamic period.⁶

The Christian Arab tribes in the Jazīra in pre-Islamic times were found on both sides of the Byzantine/Sassanian border and were used as mercenaries by both great empires.⁷

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1. Al-Bakrī, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 69-70.
 2. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 600-602; al-Shābushtī, al-Diyārāt, ed. K. 'Awwād, (Baghdad, 1951), pp. 147-148.
 3. Al-Shābushtī, op. cit., p. 31. Cf. J.S. 'Alī, Naṣārā al-'Irāq fi'l 'Aṣr al-Umawī, typewritten M.A. thesis, (Baghdad, 1974), pp. 487-90.
 4. A. Voobus, History of Asceticism, (Louvain, 1960), vol. 2, p. 352.
 5. F. Nau, Les Arabes Chrétiens de Mesopotamie, (Paris, 1933), p. 16.
 6. Cf. chapter 3, p. 123.
 7. Joshua the Stylite, op. cit., pp. 45, 64; Zachariah, op. cit., p. 225; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, pp. 58-60.

V. The Christians of the Jazīra under Sassanian and Byzantine rule

In the period immediately preceding Islam, the Jazīra was at times ruled by both of the great empires, Persia and Byzantium. The sources available at present do not give much information about the relationship between the Parthian kings and their Christian subjects.¹

The sources on the treatment of the Christians under the Sassanians are mostly Christian. Islamic sources which deal with this subject are probably based on Christian ones. The information available therefore is one-sided and should be treated with caution. On the other hand, as discussed elsewhere,² Christian writers are at times capable of less biased accounts and can be critical of the Christians themselves. Evidence is not available for all the Sassanian kings. The information provided below is what is available in the present state of knowledge.

In general, it would appear that the Sassanian kings believed that the Christian religion was a very serious threat to their throne, and most of them therefore persecuted the Christians. One such

1. In 226 A.D. the Sassanian Persians overthrew the Parthians and managed to rule Persia from that date until 637 A.D./16 A.H.

2. Cf. the survey of the Christian Sources, pp. xv-xxxvi.

persecution began as early as the reign of Shahpur I (241 A.D. to 272 A.D.) as the result of a war against Byzantium. This king captured a large number of Christians from Sinjār, Bīth^ʿArabāyā, Bīth Zabadī and other places in the Jazīra and forced them to settle in different parts of the Sassanian Empire.¹ This information indicates that the Sassanians ruled the above places in the time of Shahpur I, although the exact border in the Jazīra between the two great Empires must have shifted constantly.

The worst persecution of the Christians began in the reign of Shahpur II (309 A.D. to 379 A.D.) and continued according to the sources for forty years.² By the time this king came to the throne, the Byzantine Empire had become officially Christian.³ Now every Christian in the Sassanian world could be suspected of complicity with the Byzantines,⁴ with whom the Sassanian Empire was almost constantly at war. This

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, pp. 47-48; al-Thaʿālibī, op. cit., p. 488; al-Saʿrdī, vol. 1, (PQ, vol.4), p.221. J. Labouret, Le Christianisme dans L'Empire Perse sous La Dynastie Sassanide, (Paris, 1904), p. 19.
 2. Al-Saʿrdī, vol.1(PQ, Vol.4)p.298; Bar Senaya, p.65.
 3. Sozomen, op. cit., pp. 7-8; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 58; al-Masʿūdī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 350; Bar-Senaya, p. 103.
 4. Sozomen, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

was undoubtedly the main cause of the renewed hostility shown to the members of the Eastern Church by Shahpur II,¹ an attitude which was only strengthened by Constantine claiming protection over all the Christian subjects of Shahpur II.² There is incidentally evidence that by this time Christianity had spread widely in the Persian Empire.³

Other factors worked against the Persian Christians. They were disliked because of their use of Syriac in their liturgy.⁴ Moreover, the Zoroastrian leader who was now the king's adviser was strongly opposed to the Christians. The Persian Jews were also suspected of adding to the flame of hatred against the Christians.⁵

For all these reasons Shahpur II punished his Christian subjects by death and persistent tortures in order to make them renounce Christianity.⁶ According to one Christian source he "ordered the killing of the Christians in Āshūr, the Euphrates, al-Marj and the Jazīra ... a total of 100,000 in one place and 90,000

1. Ibid., p. 59.

2. Ibid., p. 68; Theodoret, op. cit., p. 77.

3. Sozomen, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

4. W. Shedd, Islam and the Oriental Churches, (Philadelphia, 1904), p. 20; B. O'Leary, The Syriac Church and Fathers, (London, 1909), p.74.

5. Sozomen, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

6. Sozomen, op. cit., p. 59.

in another."¹ According to other sources, he began with the leaders of the churches, bishops, ascetics, other clergy and then the ordinary Christian people. He ordered that those whom he killed should not be buried but that they should stay under the sun's heat to become food for the birds. He swore by his God, the sun and the fire that he would never stop cutting off their heads unless they prayed to the sun. This order was circulated to all the provinces.²

Sozomen writes:

"I shall briefly state that the number of the men and women whose names have been ascertained, and who were martyred at this period has been computed to be upwards of sixteen thousand, while the multitude of martyrs whose names are unknown was so great that the Persians, the Syrians, and the inhabitants of Edessa, have failed in all their efforts to compute the number."³

The above accounts are obviously suspect in the exact numbers provided, but they do give strong evidence that the Christians did suffer greatly from the policies of Shahpur II.

1. Ibn Mattī, p. 18.

2. Al-Sa'rdī, vol. 1, (PO, vol. 4), pp. 298-299;
cf. Bar-Senaya, p. 65; Sozomen, op. cit., p. 60.

3. Op. cit., p. 67.

Shahpur II also "imposed intolerably oppressive taxes upon the Christians, although he knew the generality of them had voluntarily embraced poverty."¹ He further ordered that the Catholicos should be killed² and that the Christians should not be allowed to appoint a successor for him. The seat of the Catholicos remained vacant for about forty years.³ Shahpur II also captured a large number of the Christians from Sinjār, Āmid and from other places in the Jazīra and forced them to settle in Tustar and al-Sūs in Persia,⁴ where they would be less able to be in immediate contact with Byzantium.

In the reign of Bahram IV (388 A.D. to 399 A.D.) however, the Christians were destined to enjoy a better fate. Because of the good relationship between Bahram IV and the Byzantine emperor, the Christians were left in comparative peace for a long time.⁵ This was also the case at the beginning of the reign of his successor, Yazdagird I (399 A.D. to 420 A.D.), from whom the

1. Sozomen, op. cit., p. 59.

2. Ibid., p. 59.

3. Bar-Senaya, p. 65.

4. James of Edessa, The Chronological Canon, ed. E.W. Brooks, in Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, (Leipzig, 1809), vol. 53, p. 310; al-Tha'ālibī, op. cit., p. 530; Labouret, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

5. Bar-Senaya, p. 65.

Christians obtained privileges. Mar Utha, the bishop of Mayyāfāriqīn, managed to hold a council in 410 A.D. to discuss with his fellow-Christians all the problems experienced by them under Sassanian rule and in order for unity in the Church to become reality. They openly praised Yazdagird I for his virtues and asked God to protect him. In this council the Eastern Christians were granted religious autonomy.¹

Later on in his reign, Yazdagird I changed his religious policies and began to persecute the Christians. Accordingly, he ordered that they should not be permitted to appoint a Catholicos either in his lifetime or after his death.² Yazdagird's change of heart was apparently caused by the bishop Abdas who destroyed a Persian fire-temple. Yazdagird sent for Abdas, reproved him in a kind manner and asked him to re-erect the temple, but Abdas refused to obey.³

In the first year of the rule of Acacius, the

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1. A. Christensen, Īrān fi'l-'Ahd al-Sāssānī, Arabic trans. Y. al-Khashshāb, (Cairo, 1957), p. 275; W. Wigram, An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church, (London, 1910), pp. 94-97; W.G. Young, Patriarch, Shah and Caliph, (Rawalpindi, 1974), pp. 27-36.
 2. Bar-Senaya, p. 66.
 3. Theodoret, op. cit., pp. 342-344.

Nestorian Catholicos (485 A.D. to 496 A.D.), who lived during the reigns of two Sassanian kings, Balas (485 A.D. to 488 A.D.) and Qubādh (488 A.D. to 496 A.D.), the Church abolished celibacy among the clergy and even permitted bishops to marry in order to "avoid the fornication and immorality that spread among the clergy."¹ This change of policy may well have been motivated by a desire on the part of the Christians to improve their image in the eyes of the adherents of Zoroastrianism who reproved the Christians because of their refraining from marriage.

On the two reigns of Qubādh (the second lasted from 498 A.D. to 531 A.D.), Joshua the Stylite states "... We saw with our eyes and heard with our own ears ... captivity and deportation of whole districts, razing and burning of churches."² Qubādh also "massacred ... eighty thousand men" from Āmid.³

Khusrau I (531 A.D. to 590 A.D.) was interested in Christianity. When the Catholicos of the Nestorians complained about the Jacobites, Khusrau I ordered the two sides to hold a disputation in his presence and he

1. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 92.

2. Op. cit., p. 4; cf. Unknown historian, op. cit., p. 36.

3. James of Edessa, op. cit., p. 317.

showed a clear preference for the Jacobite side.¹ This generally sympathetic attitude to Jacobite Christianity was less in evidence when one of his own family was converted to the Christian faith.²

At the beginning of Khusrau II's reign (590 A.D.-628 A.D.), a rival claimant, Bahram, rebelled against him and compelled him to take refuge in the Byzantine territory. The Byzantine emperor, Maurice (582 A.D.-602 A.D.), helped him in his struggle against his enemy Bahram.³ Certainly, Khusrau II seems to have been sympathetic to Christianity at this point. He is reported to have sent golden crosses to the Patriarch of Antioch and married a Christian woman.⁴

Once established on the Persian throne, however, he began to persecute his Christian subjects, ordering them to pay double tax and seizing their property.⁵ He also ordered that all the churches in the Jazīra and

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1. John of Ephesus, Ecclesiastical History, ed. J.P. Margoliouth, (Leiden, 1909), p. 72.
 2. Bar-Hebraeus, op. cit., p. 182. Cf. Solomon al-Baṣrī, op. cit., p. 155.
 3. John of Nikiu, The Chronicle of John Bishop of Nikiu, trans. R.H. Charles, (London, 1916), pp. 155-156. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, pp. 179-180; al-Tha'ālibī, op. cit., pp. 668-671.
 4. Evagrius, op. cit., pp. 306-308.
 5. Al-Marjī, p. 61; Ibn Mattī, p. 52.

Syria should be destroyed and that all their treasures, marble, silver and wood should be seized.¹ He also accused the Christians of being secret agents for Byzantium.²

Khusrau II prevented the Nestorians from appointing a Catholicos and the seat remained vacant for 17 years.³ This hostile attitude to the Nestorians apparently came from the influence of a Jacobite physician named Gabriel who was appointed chief physician to Khusrau II and Queen Shīrīn. Gabriel and his patient Shīrīn did all in their power to help the Jacobites and denigrate the Nestorians.⁴ Because of the harsh policy used against them in the matter of the appointment of a Catholicos, the people of Naṣībīn revolted against Khusrau II. His commander seized control of the city after swearing to its inhabitants that no harm would befall them if they came out and surrendered the city. When they opened the gate of the city, however, and went out to him, he treated them badly, took their property as booty, arrested the well-known persons among them and destroyed

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1. Agabius, Kitāb al-‘Anwān, (Beirut, 1907), p. 335; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, pp. 181-182.
 2. Agabius, op. cit., p. 336.
 3. Al-Marjī, p. 49; Ibn Mattī, p. 52; Bar-Senaya, p. 68.
 4. Unknown historian, al-Tārīkh al-Ṣaghīr, (Baghdad, 1976), p. 74.

their houses.¹

Because of his bias in favour of the Jacobites and their influence over him, Khusrau also persecuted the Malkites. He ordered all the Malkite bishops to be exiled from the Jazīra,² and tried to compel the inhabitants of Edessa who were Malkite to leave their schism, which was the official doctrine of the Byzantine Empire and therefore suspect, and to become Jacobites or Nestorians.³ By offering the people of Edessa this choice, Khusrau II no doubt hoped for a greater success in weaning them away from the Byzantine official religion.

In the reign of Shīrawīh (628-629 A.D.) the Christians managed to fill the office of Catholicos.⁴ Moreover, Shīrawīh sent a delegation to the Byzantine Empire. In the delegation were Metropolitans, one of whom was the Metropolitan of Naṣībīn. They succeeded in making peace between Persia and Byzantium.⁵ In the reign of Queen Burān which followed the reign of Shīrawīh, another delegation was sent in 630 A.D. to Byzantium which was made up of many well-known Christians. They

1. Unknown historian, op. cit., p. 64.

2. Al-Sa'rdī, vol. 2, (PO, vol. 13), p. 469.

Michael, vol. 2, pp. 390-391.

3. Agabius, op. cit., pp. 335-336.

4. Unknown historian, op. cit., p. 87; al-Marjī, p. 67.

5. Al-Marjī, pp. 67-68.

managed to make a peace treaty between the two empires.¹

A few general observations should be made here since they are relevant to the persecution of the Christians by the Sassanians. Firstly, irreconcilable religious differences existed between the Nestorians and the Jacobites. Both sides tried to get rid of the other by levelling many accusations in the Persian court at their rivals.² It would appear that generally speaking those Sassanian kings who favoured the Christians supported the Nestorians, although as already discussed, there are isolated examples of preference being shown to the Jacobites. As is well-known, the Nestorians had taken refuge in the Sassanian Empire from Byzantine persecution and the Sassanian kings tended to support their sect, thus sharpening the differences in the belief of Christians on both sides of the border between the two great empires.

It could happen, however, that the Nestorians displayed an ability to disagree with their Sassanian masters. When asked to accompany the Sassanian king

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1. Unknown historian, op. cit., p. 90; al-Marjī, pp. 67-68; Marī, p. 61; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 232.
 2. John of Ephesus, op. cit., p. 72; Unknown historian, op. cit., pp. 58, 74; Agabius, op. cit., p. 335; E. Rehatsek, "Christianity in the Persian Dominions" in The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, (Bombay, 1878), vol. xiii, pp. 67-68.

on a campaign, occasionally the Catholicos refused.¹

As regards the policy of the Byzantine emperors towards the Christians of the Jazīra, information is somewhat limited. Justin I (518-527 A.D.) is mentioned as persecuting the Jacobites.² A further reference is made to the Byzantine emperor Phocas (602-610 A.D.) who became angry with the Christians in Antioch, Ladhāqīyya and the Jazīra.³ Moreover, Marī states that "in the reign of the bishop Mar-Utha (d. in the 5th century A.D.) the Byzantine Patriarchs took captive many people from Bīth'Arabāyā and the Jazīra regions. They were about four thousand including the bishops of these regions."⁴

Michael the Syrian, a Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch in the latter half of the twelfth century A.D., relates that the Emperor Heraclius when he had overrun the Jazīra in 5 A.H./626 A.D. ordered "that anyone who would not adhere to the Malkite sect was to have his nose and ears cut off and his house pillaged. This

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1. Unknown historian, op. cit., pp. 55, 58.
 2. John of Ephesus, op. cit., p. 2. For more detail cf. W.H.C. Frend, The Rise of the Monophysite Movement, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 247; S. Ashbrook, "Asceticism in Adversity : An Early Byzantine Experience" ed. in The Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, (London, 1980), vol. 6, pp. 3-11.
 3. Agabius, op. cit., p. 330.
 4. P. 31.

persecution lasted a long time ... the Romans ... wherever they ruled cruelly robbed our churches and monasteries and condemned us without pity ... our churches were taken from us and were given to the Malkites ... because of that the great churches at Edessa and those of Harran were taken from us."¹

It would appear from the above information that the Byzantine Empire in their policy towards the Christians in the Jazīra favoured their own official Malkite doctrine. Moreover, the Jacobites in the Jazīra seem to have been under attack from not only the Sassanians but also the Byzantines.

1. Vol. 2, pp. 410-411.

CHAPTER II

THE ISLAMIC CONQUEST OF THE JAZĪRA

It is generally agreed amongst the earliest Islamic historical sources that the Muslim army came from Syria in Sha'bān 18 A.H./August 639 A.D. to conquer the Jazīra; they were under the leadership of 'Iyād b. Ghanam.¹ It was the time of the harvest.

There is dispute about the order in which the cities of the Jazīra fell to the Muslims. All the Christian

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1. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 172-173; al-Ya'qūbī, Tārīkh (Najaf, 1964), vol. 2, p. 140; Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ; Tārīkh Khalīfa, ed. S. Zakkar, (Damascus, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 130-31.

As mentioned in a later part of this chapter, there is one account only which disagrees with this dating. One of the two sources used by al-Ṭabarī in his description of the conquest of the Jazīra is Sayf b. 'Umar. This account gives the date 17 A.H. and assigns the major role in the conquest of this area to the Kūfan army. This is the only account which dissents from the general view which stresses that the attack came from Syria. Sayf b. 'Umar was a Kūfan and was heavily biased in favour of that city. The two leaders of the conquest of the Jazīra, according to Sayf b. 'Umar, were also Kūfans, Suhayl b. 'Adī and 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Atbān. The other historians do not, however, mention these two men as being involved in the conquest of the area.

sources¹ and certain Muslim accounts state that al-Ruhā was the first city to fall.² On the other hand, al-Balādhurī³ and certain other Muslim writers⁴ say that the Muslims began by taking al-Raqqa. The latter view would appear to be more acceptable. In the first place, the sources are virtually unanimous, as already mentioned, that the conquerors came from Syria and the sensible approach would normally be for them to take the cities and citadels in the order in which they encountered them en route. Geography dictates that the order should therefore be al-Raqqa, Ḥarrān and al-Ruhā.⁵

The Christian sources, moreover, naturally emphasise the importance of the loss of al-Ruhā and may well have

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1. Except Sa'īd b. al-Piṭrīq, Kitāb al-Tārīkh, (Beirut, 1909), vol. 2, p. 20.
 2. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 521; Tell-Maḥrē, p. 6; Michael, vol. 2, p. 421; Chronography, p. 96; Agabius, op. cit., p. 344; Abū Yūsuf, p. 23; Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, op. cit., p. 130; Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Sa'īd, Tārīkh al-Raqqa, ed. T. al-Na'sānī, (Ḥamā, 1959), pp. 3, 6.
 3. P. 173.
 4. Ibn A'tham, vol. 1, p. 326; al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, pp. 98, 127-30; al-Ya'qūbī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 140.
 5. Cf. al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, pp. 127-130; al-Balādhurī, p. 173.

given this event pride of place in their accounts, thereby glossing over the historical order of the conquest. Al-Ruhā was known to be more difficult to take and its northerly position and good defences make it unlikely that the Muslims would begin there.¹ It is far more probable that the Muslims would choose to attack the weakest place in the area first; not al-Ruhā where the biggest contingent of Byzantine forces was concentrated.

According to al-Balādhurī, the attack on al-Raqqā was during the time of the harvest. 'Iyād laid siege to the city and after five or six days, the Byzantine governor of the city asked for peace from 'Iyād. 'Iyād agreed and made a peace treaty with the city. Amongst the conditions of the treaty was the provision that the

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1. The Sassanians tried several times to take al-Ruhā but they were successful only on one occasion. See Joshua the Stylite, op. cit., pp. 46, 48-51, 53, 55; J.B. Segal, Edessa, (Oxford, 1970), pp. 5-192. This was because of its strategic strength.

ibid. Khusrau II who had been previously in Edessa on his flight to the Byzantine emperor Maurice, conquered the town in 609 A.D. In 7 A.H./ 628 A.D. Heraclius retook the city. Cf. EI¹, (art:- Orfeā), p. 995.

inhabitants should pay the jizya to the Muslims.¹

It is probable that 'Iyāḍ then went to Ḥarrān, whose people asked him to go to al-Ruhā, promising to accept whatever terms he might make with that city.² Agreeing to that, 'Iyāḍ advanced to al-Ruhā whose people gathered against him and put up a spirited defence against the Muslims. The Muslims, however, eventually forced them to seek refuge in the city. After a short time, the inhabitants of the city offered to capitulate and make peace with the Muslims. 'Iyāḍ accepted their offer and made a peace treaty with them similar to that of al-Raqqa. Then he went back to Ḥarrān and made terms similar to those of al-Ruhā.³ 'Iyāḍ sent troops to Sumaysāt whose people also made terms similar to those of al-Ruhā.⁴ It is probable that the inhabitants of these cities were temporising in their speedy negotiations with the Muslims. The above-mentioned incidents occurred at the time of the harvest, so the

1. Al-Balādhurī, p. 173; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 53; al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, p. 98.

2. Perhaps they acted in this way because of the long-standing political, economic and religious hostility between these two cities. Cf. J.B. Segal, Edessa and Harran, (London, 1963), p. 6.

3. Al-Balādhurī, p. 174; Abū Yūsuf, p. 23; al-Wāqidī, pp. 127-29.

4. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 174-5.

cities were probably anxious to sue for peace and to pay a sum of money, for economic reasons, to buy off the Muslims while they were gathering in the harvest. Moreover, it is quite likely that the inhabitants of these cities in the Jazīra thought that this attack was just another Bedouin raid and that speedy payment of money would rid them of this menace once more.

When the inhabitants of the cities of the Jazīra began to realise that this was not a normal raid but a full-scale conquest on the part of the Muslims, they rebelled, once the harvest had been taken in, at the beginning of 19 A.H./640 A.D. The continuing presence of the Muslims in the area no doubt gradually made the inhabitants aware that this was not like any other Bedouin attack to which no doubt they had become accustomed. According to al-Balādhurī, the Muslims returned to these cities. There would appear to have been a period of a few days' resistance on the part of the inhabitants of the cities before the terms imposed were finally accepted.¹

The peace treaty with al-Ruhā which was the Byzantine provincial capital² and its surrender to the Muslims was the prelude for many of the small towns to follow suit.³

1. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 165-176, 178.

2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 23.

3. Ibid., p. 23; al-Balādhurī, pp. 174-6; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 53.

Other cities in the Jazīra were taken on the first attempt by force in 19 A.H./640 A.D. These include Dārā,¹ Talla² and Naṣībīn.³ There are reports of severe struggle and resistance on the part of such cities as Ra's al-'Ayn,⁴ Ṭūr 'Abdīn and Dārā. Most of these cities were conquered quite quickly, however. Although force was applied by the Muslims, once they had entered these cities, they imposed the same kind of peace treaties as used for the other cities in the Jazīra.⁵

When the eastern part of the Jazīra was conquered in 20 A.H./641 A.D. by troops from Iraq and Mosul,⁶ the conquest of this area was now completed. The conquest of the Jazīra had taken only 18 months.⁷

Persian troops, probably in the eastern part in the

1. Tell-Mahrē, p. 6; Michael, vol. 2, p. 420;
Chronography, p. 96.
2. Tell-Mahrē, p. 6.
3. Al-Balādhurī, p. 176.
4. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 175-77; al-Wāqidī, vol. 2,
pp. 98-107, 152; Ibn A'tham, pp. 336-337.
5. These treaties will be discussed later on in this
chapter.
6. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 331-332; Ibn al-Faqīh, op. cit.,
p. 128.
7. Al-Balādhurī, p. 176.

Jazīra,¹ raised no problems for the Muslims in that area at the time of the conquest. Abū Yūsuf writes:

"As for that part of the Jazīra which was in the hand of the Persians, I heard nothing that I can recall except that the Persians, when their defeat at al-Qādisiyya (16 A.H./637 A.D.) became known to their troops in this region, withdrew altogether and abandoned the places where they had been. Only the inhabitants of Sinjār established a watchtower in their city to protect their plain ... When Persia perished and men came to summon them to Islam, they accepted and still remained in their city."²

Evidence from Muslim and Christian sources would tend to substantiate the view of Abū Yūsuf. Whilst the early historians have frequent mention of Byzantine attempts to stop the Muslims from conquering the Jazīra,³ they do not mention anything about the Persians attempting to prevent the Muslims from taking the area.

According to certain Christian sources, the

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1. The border is difficult to place but it is likely that most of the Jazīra was by now in Byzantine hands after their recent victories over Sassanian Persia (the last of which was in 7 A.H./628 A.D.)
 2. P. 23; cf. al-Balādhurī, p. 176.
 3. This will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

Byzantine military commander in the Jazīra, John, made a financial agreement with 'Iyād b. Ghanam, the leader of the Muslim troops who had come to the Jazīra. In this treaty, the Byzantines agreed to pay 100,000 gold coins annually, on condition that the Arabs would not cross the Euphrates either militarily or peacefully. The payment was apparently made only once since the Byzantine emperor, Heraclius, was angered by the agreement, removed John from his position and appointed a new commander, Ptolemy, who was to engage in direct military action against the Muslims.¹ Muslim sources make no mention of such an agreement.

So much for the general outline description of the conquest of the Jazīra. The individual contributions of both Muslim and Christian writers to this subject will now be discussed and assessed.

I. A discussion of the Islamic and Christian sources for the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra

A. Islamic sources

1. Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 A.H./798 A.D.)
Kitāb al-Kharāj

Abū Yūsuf is a very valuable source for the history

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1. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 521 (A.M.6128); Agabius, op. cit., p. 344; Michael, vol. 2, p. 420. For more detail cf. pp. 99-102 in this chapter.

of the Muslims' conquest of the Jazīra. His work Kitāb al-Kharāj, although it deals with fiqh, provides the earliest information on the subject of the Muslim conquest of the Jazīra. The work is especially useful since it provides useful background information on the peace treaty negotiated between the Muslims and the prominent citizens of al-Ruhā in which it may be inferred that the Christians managed to make the Muslims accept their conditions in the treaty. Moreover, Abū Yūsuf makes the valuable comment that terms similar to those made with al-Ruhā were also arranged in connection with other cities in the Jazīra.

Generally, his work reveals a strong Muslim bias and suggests that the Muslim conquerors encountered no resistance at all from the farmers of the Jazīra.¹ This is at variance with what other historians such as al-Balādhurī² and al-Wāqidī³ suggest. These last two mention fierce clashes between Muslims and Christians at the time of the conquest.

2. Al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad b. 'Umar (d. 207 A.H./822 A.D.)

Futūḥ al-Shām

Al-Wāqidī was not just content to accept accounts

1. P. 23.

2. Pp. 173-4, 176.

3. P. 106.

which he had heard. He had also apparently visited in person most of the area in which the conquest took place.¹

The major work of al-Wāqidī used in this thesis is the Futūḥ al-Shām which he writes from the point of view of a pious muḥaddith with a highly romanticised picture of the history of ^{the} early conquests. He stresses that Allah was behind the Muslims' victory over the Christians in the Jazīra and mentions many miracles.²

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1. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Tārīkh Baghdād, (Cairo, 1931), vol. 3, pp. 4-6; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, ‘Uyūn al-Āthār, (Cairo, 1356 A.H.), vol. 2, pp. 6-7. Al-Wāqidī was often criticised by later commentators for tampering with asānīd and giving only one version of events. Cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., pp. 12-18. But the main attacks made on him were in the area of ḥadīth, although even here some famous scholars such as Ibn Sallām, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī and al-Dārwardī praised him as a muḥaddith; cf. al-Dhahabī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 665; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 20.

Al-Wāqidī was not, however, attacked by commentators because of his contribution to historical writing.

2. For example he writes that when the Muslims besieged Mayyāfāriqīn, a door suddenly was opened through the wall of part of the city. Cf. vol. 2, p. 158.

In his account of the conquest he demonstrates that the urban population had no objection to the Muslims but that the clergy and the governors of the cities made vigorous but unsuccessful attempts to stop the Muslims.¹ He even suggests that the Muslims managed to convert some well-known Christian personalities to Islam after lengthy debate.²

Al-Wāqidī provides useful information on the Arab tribes in the Jazīra and their attitudes towards Islam. He explains their hostility and resistance towards Islam as an attempt to keep their political independence rather than because they wanted to remain Christian for religious reasons.³

Another useful area of information provided by al-Wāqidī is his description of the attitude of the Christian clergy towards the Muslim conquest. Here, according to al-Wāqidī, the clergy actively helped the Byzantine governors in their struggle against the Muslims. This struggle was conducted in a spirit of religious fervour and the Christians were encouraged to try to kill the Muslims to the "greater glory of

1. Pp. 125, 130.

2. Pp. 129-31, 161. This pious attitude shown by al-Wāqidī towards the conquest may well be the main reason why he was held in such respect as a historian by the muḥaddithīn.

3. Pp. 98-9, 107-8, 111-2, 117, 140-2.

God."¹

Al-Balādhurī based his account of the conquest of the Jazīra² on this work of al-Wāqidī, deeming him to be the most "trustworthy" of sources.

3. Ibn Khayyāṭ, Khalīfa (d. 240 A.H./854 A.D.)

Tārīkh Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ

Ibn Khayyāṭ was a native of Baṣra and his work reveals a marked bias in favour of 'Uthmān.³ Most of the narrators he quotes in his history were from Baṣra.

His approach in his work is annalistic. His information about the Muslim conquest of the Jazīra is limited but his work contains four relevant accounts. Two of these begin by mentioning the name of his authority, a man called Ḥātim b. Muslim.⁴ One account merely states "They said that Abū 'Ubayda sent Khālīd b. al-Walīd to the Jazīra."⁵ The fourth account is prefaced

1. Pp. 125, 138, 146-7.

2. Pp. 172-83.

3. Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, (Beirut, 1967), vol. 7, p. 28; al-Dhahabī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 265.

4. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 137; idem, Tahdīb al-Tahdīb, (Hyderabad, 1329 A.H.), vol. 2, p. 130.

5. P. 130.

by the statement: "Some scholars of the Jazīra told me,"¹ but no names are mentioned.

Ibn Khayyāṭ uses both local information and official Medinan accounts. The fact that he draws his information from these two separate areas gives the reader two scholarly points of view and affords him the opportunity of choosing between different accounts.

4. Al-Balādhurī (d. 279 A.H./892 A.D.)

Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān

In his chapter on the conquest of the Jazīra, al-Balādhurī tries to relate in a straightforward way the facts as he heard them. Whenever possible he bases every narrative on oral transmission and on an independent isnād. Where his narratives from authorities fail him, he introduces the narratives by "they said"² (قالوا) or "he claimed"³ (زعم) or "it is said"⁴ (يقال) or "some narrators said"⁵ (قال بعض الرواة). Sometimes, he does not mention isnād, but says "the people

1. P. 131.

2. Pp. 174, 179, 180.

3. Pp. 177.

4. Pp. 172, 173, 175.

5. P. 177.

from al-Raqqā told me"¹ or "some learned people informed me."²

Sometimes al-Balādhurī used reports originating from the Jazīra but most of these are without isnād and are very brief.³

Al-Balādhurī is not just a reporter. He is capable of weighing one account against another and judging between them. Sometimes he gives an account which he dismisses as unreliable by providing another which he prefaces by the expression "the fact is"⁴ (الثبت أن).

In his chapter on the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra, he quotes al-Wāqidī on six different occasions; this is more often than any other source. Most of these quotations are made through Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 A.H./ 845 A.D.). Personal information imparted by al-Wāqidī to al-Balādhurī is extensively used by the latter in his account of the conquest of the Jazīra.⁵ In the course of these conversations, it is probable that al-Wāqidī was critical of some of the reports he himself had used in his book.⁶ Such assessments of his own reports are

1. P. 178.

2. P. 179.

3. Pp. 175, 177, 178.

4. Pp. 173, 177.

5. Pp. 172-6.

6. For example, he says on one occasion "the most reliable" (أثبت). Cf. p. 172.

not to be found in the actual text of al-Wāqidī and may well be based on personal discussion that al-Wāqidī had with Ibn Sa'd or al-Balādhurī himself.

It is noteworthy that al-Balādhurī's use of al-Wāqidī selects what is essentially historical material and ignores the more miraculous elements.

Al-Balādhurī is the only Arab historian who gives full details of the treaties which the Muslims concluded with the Christians in the Jazīra. He also gives detailed information about the peasants' attitudes towards the Muslim conquest of the Jazīra.¹ In his chapter on the conquest of this area, his writing is free from any marked bias in favour of the Muslims, although of course in other sections of his work a great emotional pride in the achievements of the early Muslims is visible.²

5. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H./923 A.D.)

Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī

Al-Ṭabarī quotes reports about the Muslim conquest of the Jazīra from Sayf b. 'Umar.³ He cites no account

1. Pp. 173-4, 176.

2. Pp. 256-8.

3. Sayf seems to have come originally from Kūfa but to have lived in Baṣra. He belonged to the tribe of Tamīm or Ḍabba. He died in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193 A.H./786-809 A.D.). Cf. al-Dhahabī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 255.

from any other authority except when giving the date of the conquest which he mentions on the authority of Ibn Ishāq.¹ Through al-Ṭabarī the reports of Saʿf b. ʿUmar spread to other later historical works and even into biographical literature. As Saʿf b. ʿUmar is a controversial figure, he will be discussed in some detail. A fairly full discussion of Saʿf's value as a historian was given by Wellhausen who did not rate him very highly.² But the most detailed analysis of Saʿf's value is given by the Iraqī scholar, Murtaḍa al-ʿAskarī, who wrote two books about him.³ In these two books he sets out to prove that Saʿf falsified history and that he made up imaginary historical events along with their characters. Furthermore al-ʿAskarī suggests that Saʿf provided his reports with fabricated isnād and with narrators known only to him.

A major objection to the approach of al-ʿAskarī is that he analyses the accounts given by Saʿf b. ʿUmar very closely and critically but he accepts without hesitation or reservation narratives given by historians such as al-Balādhurī and al-Yaʿqūbī. He should apply the same

1. P. 53.

2. EI¹ (art. Saif)

3. The first is called ʿAbd Allah b. Sabā, (Beirut, 1973), 2 vols. The second is called Mia wa Khamsūn Ṣaḥābī Mukhtalaq, (Beirut, 1974), 2 vols.

close critical mesh to all the early 'Abbāsīd sources and not only to one.

Turning more specifically to the conquest of the Jazīra, the reports which Sayf gives contain unfamiliar names in their isnād, such as Muḥammad, al-Muḥallab, Ṭalḥa, 'Amr and 'Aṭīyya,¹ which do not appear in the accounts of other early Muslim historians or biographical works. According to al-'Askarī, Sayf invented these names and he may well be right in this assertion.²

Another suspicious aspect of Sayf's account of the conquest of the Jazīra is his dating of 17 A.H./638 A.D.³ which is confirmed by no other source; al-Balādhurī,⁴ Ibn Khayyāṭ,⁵ and al-Ya'qūbī⁶ give the year 18 A.H./639 A.D. for the start of the invasion. In his narratives Sayf tends to favour the people of Iraq, especially the Kūfāns. In this instance, he assigns the major role in the conquest of the Jazīra to Kūfan forces under the leadership of Suḥayl b. 'Adī and 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Atbān⁷ who were also

1. Pp. 54-6.

2. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 32.

3. Vol. 4, p. 53.

4. P. 172.

5. Op. cit., pp. 130-31.

6. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 140.

7. Vol. 4, pp. 51-52.

Kūfans. No other authority mentions this.

Sayf gives an impressive amount of detailed information about the Arab Christians in the Jazīra. Such information is corroborated by other snippets of information included in works which precede al-Ṭabarī, such as Abū Yūsuf in his book al-Kharāj,¹ Yāhya b. Ādam, in Kitāb al-Kharāj² and al-Balādhurī in Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān.³ There is probably less cause for doubt about the veracity of Sayf's reports when the information they contain accords with that given by other early historians, unless of course one casts deep suspicion on the total edifice of early 'Abbāsī historiography, as does Dr. Crone in her latest book.⁴

Al-'Askarī erroneously thinks that Sayf says that the general leader of the Muslims in the Jazīra was Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās,⁵ whereas in fact Sayf clearly states that the general leader in the Jazīra was 'Iyād b. Ghanam, whose military base was in the centre of the area.⁶

1. Pp. 68-69.

2. Pp. 46-8.

3. Pp. 181-83.

4. P. Crone, Slaves on Horses, (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 10-17.

5. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 326.

6. Vol. 4, pp. 53-54.

6. Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī (d. 314 A.H./926 A.D.)

Kitāb al-Futūḥ

This book is written from a pro-'Alīd point of view as a romantic history of the early caliphs and their conquests. Its information about the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra is concerned with most of the cities of the Jazīra, such as al-Raqqa, Ruhā, Ḥarrān, Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. The author writes in a spirit of great religious zeal, ascribing superhuman qualities to the Muslims in their battles against the Christians.¹ He also mentions the interesting fact that there were a large number of Byzantines in al-Raqqa and Ḥarrān. Furthermore, his work is valuable because he endeavours to explain the clergy's attitudes towards the conquest.

B. Christian sources

Many of these sources are written in Arabic while others are in Syriac and one is in Greek. Those written in Arabic do not pay a great deal of attention to the Islamic conquest, but they give some useful information about some aspects of this topic.

These Arabic sources, although Christian, do not generally attack the Islamic conquest.² This may stem

1. Vol. 1, pp. 329-343.

2. Except al-Kindī who will be discussed later on.

from the fact that they are written in Arabic which made their authors avoid offending their Muslim overlords.

The Syriac sources, on the other hand, attack the Prophet and the Islamic conquest and consider that the aim of the Muslims was destruction and plunder.

The most important Christian sources in chronological order are as follows:

1. Bar-Penkayē (d. 1st century A.H./7th A.D.)

The Chronicle of Bar-Penkayē

This is a Syriac source. The author makes an emotional attack on the Islamic conquest. He describes the Muslims as barbarians who love to shed blood and pillage everything. To him the Islamic conquest and the subjection of the Christians to the Muslims is a divine punishment for their sins.¹

According to Bar-Penkayē, because the Muslims "rigorously subjected the conquered people and brought their daughters and sons into slavery," God punished them "for the ravages which they had done,"² by dividing them into numerous factions warring against each other.³

Bar-Penkayē wrote his history at the time of the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra where he lived. This made his decisions highly influenced by the troubled days

1. Pp. 173*-174*

2. P. 174*

3. The author is referring to the Islamic civil wars.

of the conquest of the Jazīra. An example of this is that in looking back on the Persian period he considered it as a golden age.¹ He seems to have forgotten the persecution the Christians had undergone under the Persians.²

2. Unknown historian (d. 1st century A.H./7 A.D.)

Al-Tārīkh al-Ṣaghīr

The author describes the Islamic conquest as an attempt to destroy Persia and Byzantium in order to obtain booty.³ The author believes that the Muslims' success against Byzantium and Persia was achieved by God.⁴ Although he does not mention his reasons for expressing this view, it may well be that he believed that the Christians had fallen short in the observance of their faith and had therefore brought upon themselves the punishment of God which manifested itself through the Muslim conquest.

3. Theophanes (d. 202 A.H./817 A.D.)

The Chronicle of Theophanes

The book is the first source that declares that the

1. Pp. 173*-174*

2. Cf. chapter one of this thesis.

3. P. 91.

4. P. 104.

Jazīra was conquered twice. This is a view not shared by Muslim writers but which was adopted by later Christian historians such as Agabius al-Manbijī¹ and Michael the Syrian.²

In his description of the conquest of the Jazīra, Theophanes shows a marked pro-Christian bias and stresses the harsh treatment given to the inhabitants of al-Ruhā, Harrān and Dārā by the Muslims.³ Agabius al-Manbijī and Michael the Syrian follow the same views and probably copied him. Theophanes differs in his dating of the Muslim conquest of the Jazīra which he places in 15 A.H./636 A.D.⁴ Here again Dionysius⁵ of Tell-Mahrē, Agabius⁶ al-Manbijī and Michael⁷ the Syrian follow the same view. Most Islamic sources agree that the date of this event was 18 A.H./639 A.D.

4. Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.)

The Chronicle of Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē

The author deals with the Islamic conquest of the

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1. P. 344.
 2. Vol. 2, pp. 420-21.
 3. P. 521 (A.M. 6128-6130)
 4. P. 521 (A.M. 6128)
 5. P. 5.
 6. P. 344.
 7. Vol. 2, p. 420.



Jazīra in the fourth part of this work. His compilation is based on such written documents as he could find. This is supplemented by information from the oral statement of old men and by his own observations.¹

He strongly attacks the Muslims and their conquest of the Jazīra which he sees as an attempt at political and economic domination of the area.² The work is permeated by a very strong Christian prejudice. It dwells on the "cruelty" of the Muslims' treatment of the people of Ṭūr 'Abdīn and Dārā and gives very high casualty figures amongst the Christians.³ He shows bias towards the Christians of Dārā in their defence against the Muslims and he mentions that the Muslim casualties far exceeded those of the Christians.⁴

5. Al-Kindī, 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Ishāq (d.3rd century A.H./ 9 A.D.)

The Apology of al-Kindī⁵

Al-Kindī wrote this work in response to his famous

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1. W. Wright, A Short History of Syriac Literature, (London, 1894), p. 202.
2. Pp. 6-7.
3. He mentions that the Muslims killed 12,000 people from Ṭūr 'Abdīn, op. cit., p. 6.
4. P. 5.
5. Ed. W. Muir, (London, 1885).

friend, 'Abd Allah b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī who invited him to become a Muslim.¹ The Apology is a contemporary account of a controversy dating from about the year 204 A.H./819 A.D. He records a discussion which took place before the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (198-218 A.H./813-833 A.D.) on the relative merits of Islam and Christianity. In this work the author casts aside the prophetic claims of Muḥammad, censures some of his actions in strongest language, reproves the ordinances of Islam, especially those relating to women, and condemns jihād with scathing denunciation.²

Al-Kindī attacks the Islamic conquest and describes it as having ruined the countries concerned. According to him, the Muslims wanted to obtain booty, to disgrace the women and satisfy their lust.³ The Muslims were driven on to undertake their conquests because of their poverty and ravenous hunger.⁴ Al-Kindī may well have had memories of the glories of his tribal past when viewing the Islamic conquest. In particular, he may have recalled the great power enjoyed by his Christian tribe of Kinda in pre-Islamic times and he openly attacks the Quraysh who, he claims, used Islam to become rich and powerful. He praises the glorious

1. P. 2.

2. Pp. 81, 85, 106, 110-111, 116 -117, 128-130, 196-7.

3. Pp. 81, 85, 116, 143, 153, 196.

4. P. 149.

deeds of his tribe Kinda,¹ and incites Christians and Jews to rise in revolt against the Muslims.²

6. Sa'īd b. al-Baṭrīq (d. 328 A.H./939 A.D.)

Kitāb al-Tārīkh al-Majmū' 'Alā al-Taḥqīq³

The author claims in his work that he has selected his material from reliable sources but he does not mention what they are. He treats the Jazīra and Iraq as an entity. His dating of the Islamic conquest of this area is inconsistent. At one point he states that the Jazīra was conquered in the days of Abū Bakr by Khālīd b. al-Walīd.⁴ Elsewhere, however, he declares that it took place in the reign of 'Umar I under the leadership of 'Iyād b. Ghanam.⁵

It is interesting that he agrees with al-Wāqidī about the Muslim conquest of Qarqīsiyā. This could mean that they obtained their reports from the same sources or that Sa'īd b. al-Biṭrīq copied from al-Wāqidī. This latter possibility seems less likely since Ibn al-Biṭrīq does not use al-Wāqidī as a source elsewhere in his work.

1. Pp.135-37.

2. Pp. 73, 77, 79.

3. Ed. L. Sheikho, (Beirut, 1909), vol. 2.

4. P. 9.

5. P. 20.

7. Agabius al-Manbijī (d. 329 A.H./940 A.D.)

Kitāb al-'Anwān¹

The author states that his sources are philosophical works and books of wisdom, but he does not mention what they are.

He deals with the Muslim conquest of the Jazīra in a brief way. He makes frequent mistakes about the names of the Muslim leaders and of the cities.

8. Unknown historian (d. 5th century A.H./11th century A.D.)

Al-Tārīkh al-Sa'rdī

This Arabic source is a late one but it is clear that it is based on such early works as the Ecclesiastical History of Daniel Bar Mariam which was written in the 1st century A.H./7th century A.D., and the Ecclesiastical History of Bar Saḥdī. The author himself is a Nestorian and he has a generally diplomatic approach to the Muslims.

This work is especially valuable for information on the position of the Christians in the Jazīra in the pre-Islamic period.

In vol. 2 of this work the author deals with the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra. The author stresses that at the time of the Muslim conquest the Christians were

1. Ed. L. Sheikho, (Beirut, 1907).

in a very difficult psychological position.¹ He shows how the Nestorian Patriarch was urged by the Sassanian king to persuade the Christians in his territory to join forces with him against the Muslims, who had already won a series of impressive victories against Persia.

According to this author the reaction of the Christians towards the eventual Islamic conquest of the Jazīra was one of relief and welcome:

"The hearts of the Christians rejoiced at the domination of the Arab - may my God strengthen and prosper it."²

9. Michael the Syrian (d. 596 A.H./1199 A.D.)

Chronicle of Michael the Syrian

This author sees the Arab conquest of the Jazīra as being primarily motivated by economic reasons. He writes that "in the year 18 A.H. the Muslims crossed the Euphrates because they had not been paid the tribute."³ This suggests that the Muslim army came from Syria to conquer the Jazīra, and in this he also agrees with most Islamic sources.

1. PC, Vol. 13 P.619

2. Ibid., p. 582.

3. Pp. 420-21.

He reveals a marked anti-Byzantine bias in his account of the Muslim conquest,¹ since he was a Jacobite. According to him, the Muslim success against Byzantium was a punishment from God for Byzantine persecution of the Jacobites.²

10. Bar-Hebraeus (d. 685 A.H./1286 A.D.)

The Chronography of Bar-Hebraeus

In his brief information on the conquest of the Jazīra this author tries to prove that the Christians did not resist the Muslims and that the Muslims took many cities by storm and killed people in order to obtain money.³ This attitude conflicts with that of Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē⁴ and Michael the Syrian⁵ who preceded him. Their view was that the people of the cities of the Jazīra resisted the Muslims and it was this resistance which made the Muslims apply force themselves.

Bar-Hebraeus relates a strange incident in which 'Umar I "crossed the Euphrates to the east and the

1. Pp. 411-12.

2. Pp. 412-13.

3. Vol. 1, p. 96.

4. P. 6.

5. Vol. 2, pp. 420-21.

citizens of Edessa went out to him and were given word (i.e. pledge concerning their city)."¹ This episode is mentioned by no other authority, either Muslim or Christian.

11. Solomon al-Baṣrī (Metropolitan of Baṣra in the 7th century A.H./13th century A.D.)

The Bee²

This book is a volume of analects, partly theological, partly historical. The author calls the work "the book of gleanings" and dedicates it to his friend, Narsī, bishop of al-Bawāzīj.³

His information on the Islamic conquest comes from the book of Methodius whom he calls the bishop of Rome⁴ (d. in the 5th century A.D.). According to Solomon al-Baṣrī, Methodius prophesied that the Islamic conquest would bring to an end the Golden Age of the world. The Muslims would come out of the desert like wild asses. They would attack and destroy every created thing,

1. P. 69.

2. Trans. E.A.W. Budge, (Oxford, 1886).

3. P. 1.

4. He made a slip here: Methodius was bishop of Olympus and Tyre, but never of Rome, cf. the comments of the editor on page 124, footnote 5. Cf. Zachariah, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

humans, animals and plants. They would be a merciless chastisement to the Christians, not because God loved them but because of the iniquity and sin perpetrated by the Christians, who had gone astray through drunkenness, anger and shameless lasciviousness, "contrary to the law of nature and of Scripture." This would bring down upon them a punishment which would be appropriate for their sins.¹

The author tries hard to prove in highly prejudiced and emotional tones that the aims of the Islamic conquest were destruction, plunder and desire for luxury. He presents the Muslims as wishing to live extravagantly and as boasting of their victories.²

The above information was clearly written as pseudo-history a long time after the Islamic conquest and attributed to Methodius to justify the fall of the Christians in their war against the Muslims. To give greater credence to his narrative, he puts it into the mouth of a respected member of the clergy.

Moreover, the author tries to give the Christians the hope of overrunning the Muslims in the future. He writes:

"Then all of a sudden there shall be
raised up against them (the Arabs) ...
and the king of Greeks shall go forth
against them in great wrath ...

1. Pp. 124-25.

2. Pp. 124-25.

and shall cast the sword and destruction into the wilderness of Yathrib and into the dwelling-place of their fathers. They shall carry off captive their wives and sons and daughters into the service of slavery ... They (the Arabs) shall be slaves unto those who served them, and bitter shall their slavery be. Then shall the earth which has become desolate of its inhabitants find peace, and the remnant that is left ... And there shall be great peace on earth ..."¹

By using the device of Methodius, Solomon al-Baṣrī may well have hoped to avoid the Muslims' anger.

When comparing Solomon al-Baṣrī with other Christian sources, it is clear that even amongst authors who are all biassed to a lesser or greater extent he is the most extreme of all. Only al-Kindī could be placed in the same category as Solomon al-Baṣrī and both these sources should be viewed with extreme caution.

1. Pp. 126-27.

II. The treaties made by the Muslims with the Christians of the Jazīra in the Islamic sources

As is well-known, the Christians in the Jazīra were placed under certain restrictions both in public and private life as the price of their living under the protection of the caliphate. The Muslims categorised the Christians as dhimmīs.

‘Iyād b. Ghanam, who was the general leader of the conquest of the Jazīra, made a number of treaties with the Christians. According to the sources, there were individual treaties concluded with the major cities in the area. There is also a version of a more general treaty for the Christians of the Jazīra which seems of dubious authenticity and which will be discussed in detail below. There was also a peace treaty made by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb with the Banu Taghlib.¹ All these treaties are mentioned in the Islamic sources only, while the Christian sources do not mention them at all.

1. Treaties with individual cities:

The Islamic sources mention two treaties; the first was made with al-Raqqā and the second was made with al-Ruhā.² As mentioned already, other cities in

1. It will be recalled that the Prophet had already made a treaty with the Banu Taghlib in 9 A.H./630 A.D.

2. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 172-173; Abū ‘Ubayd, p. 298.

the Jazīra made treaties similar to that made with al-Ruhā.¹

A. The treaty with al-Raqqa

The first form:

This form is found in the work of al-Balādhurī:

"Muḥammad b. Sa'd stated on the authority of al-Wāqidī. 'Iyād wrote to them (the inhabitants of al-Raqqa):

'In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is what 'Iyād b. Ghanam gave to the people of al-Raqqa when he entered the city. He gave them security for their lives and possessions, their churches shall not be destroyed or occupied, so long as they pay the jizya assessed on them and enter into no intrigue. It is stipulated that they build no new church or place of worship or publicly strike clappers or openly celebrate Easter Monday² or show the cross in public. Thereunto, Allah is witness and Allah is a sufficient witness.'

Signed by 'Iyād's own signature."³

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1. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 172, 174-176; Abū Yūsuf, p. 23; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 298.
 2. Bā'ūth: the Christian festival for the Monday of their Easter. Cf. P.K. Hitti, The Origins of the Islamic State, (New York, 1916), vol. 1, p. 272, n.1.
 3. Al-Balādhurī, p. 173.

This agreement is dated by al-Balādhurī to 18 A.H./639 A.D.

The second form:

Ibn A'tham mentions without isnād another version of the treaty with al-Raqqa. He writes as follows:

"'Iyād made peace with the patrīq¹ of al-Raqqa² on condition that twenty thousand dinars be paid immediately and four dinars be paid by every man annually and that whenever a minor becomes adult he should pay the poll-tax (jizya). Besides, they should pay a tithe (al-'ushr) for their cattle and they should allow billeting of the Muslims for three days. The Muslims should pay for everything taken after the third day."³

As regards the subject matter of the treaty given by al-Balādhurī, the following phrase might be considered as suspect: "So long as they pay the tribute assessed on them." The phrase is confusing. In a situation like this 'Iyād would probably have mentioned how much the Christians should pay, as was customary in other extant

1. The leader of the Byzantine army in the city.

Cf. al-Bīrūnī, Kitāb al-āthār al-bāgiyya, (Leipzig, 1923), p. 290; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-'Arūs, (Cairo, 1306 A.H.), vol. 6, p. 296. (art: Patarka).

2. The name of this man was (بنی).

3. Vol. 1, p. 327.

treaties¹ which give precise amounts to be paid as jizya. Maybe al-Balādhurī or his source omitted the precise amounts and substituted this rather general statement instead.

On the other hand, it is possible that this phrase is genuine and that its general phrasing was deliberate. Perhaps the Muslims, as they were very pre-occupied with other conquests, left the terms of the treaty vague and expected to negotiate later on the precise amounts of the jizya to be paid.

A comparison between this treaty and the version of it which Ibn A'tham reports reveals that whilst al-Balādhurī covers both the rights and the duties of the people of al-Raqqa, the treaty reported by Ibn A'tham only mentions their duties without any reference to their rights.

There is a significant statement in the form of the treaty given by Ibn A'tham who writes that the people of al-Raqqa should pay the tithe on their cattle in addition to the jizya. In the period of the conquests, the tithe ('ushr²) was imposed only on the Banu Taghlib as a double ṣadaqa instead of jizya.³ Otherwise, it was normally

1. Al-Balādhurī, p. 174; Abū Yūsuf, pp. 22, 84-85.

2. Cf. chapter III.

3. Abū Yūsuf, p. 68; Ibn Ādam, p. 48; al-Balādhurī, pp. 182-183; al-Ṭabarī, Kitāb Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', ed. J. Schacht, (Leiden, 1933), pp. 218, 228.

the Muslims' duty to pay the 'ushr, not the Christians'. Moreover, the Muslims were not in the habit of imposing heavy economic burdens on cities which had surrendered peacefully. Such heavy conditions were usually imposed on the cities entered by force. Clearly, Ibn A'tham is confused here, and it is possible to regard his form of the treaty as having been fabricated at a later date. The author may have been attempting to reconstruct that part of the first treaty which was left ambiguous, namely "so long as they pay the tribute assessed on them."

As for the version given by al-Balādhurī it is probably nearer in substance to the original treaty.

B. The treaty with al-Ruhā

The first form:

This version is included in the work of Abū 'Ubayd:

"Kathīr b. Hishām stated on the authority of al-'Alā' Ibn Abī 'Āisha the governor of al-Raqqa during the reign of 'Umar II¹ that 'Iyāḍ wrote to the inhabitants of al-Ruhā 'This is a statement from 'Iyāḍ b. Ghanam and his accompanying Muslims to the inhabitants of al-Ruhā. I have granted them security for their lives, possessions, offspring, women, city and mills, so long as they give what they rightly owe. Thereunto, Allah and his angels are witnesses.'"²

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1. Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Sa'īd, (d. 334 A.H./945 A.D.), Tārīkh al-Raqqa, p. 6.
 2. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 298.

Here again there is the dubious phrase "so long as they give what they rightly owe." Either a sentence or more has been omitted or lost, or the sum was left deliberately vague as is possible with al-Raqqā too.

The second form:

This is found in al-Balādhurī.

"Dā'ūd b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd on the authority of a grandfather of his (gives) the statement of 'Iyāḍ to the inhabitants of al-Ruhā as follows:

'In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, this is a statement from 'Iyāḍ b. Ghanam and his accompanying Muslims to the inhabitants of al-Ruhā. I have granted them security for their lives, possessions, offspring, women, city and mills, so long as they give what they rightly owe. They are bound to repair our bridges and guide those of us who go astray. Thereunto Allah and his angels and the Muslims are witness.'"¹

Here there is a recurrence of the doubtful phrase "so long as they give what they rightly owe." As stated above, this phrase is ambiguous and suggests an omission or that the sum was left deliberately vague.

1. Al-Balādhurī, p. 174.

The third form:

Al-Balādhurī mentions another form of the treaty.

He writes:

"Muḥammad b. Sa'd states on the authority of al-Wāqidī, 'Iyād wrote to them the following statement:
'In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is a statement from 'Iyād b. Ghanam to the bishop of al-Ruhā. If you open to me the city gate and agree to offer to me for every man one dinar and two muddii¹ of wheat, then I grant you safety for your persons, possessions and those dependent on you. It is incumbent on you to guide those who go astray, to repair the bridges and roads and give good counsel to the Muslims. Thereunto Allah is witness and He is sufficient.'"²

It is noteworthy that this treaty does not make any reference to the Christians' religious rights, although the bishop of the city was the representative of the population of the city in signing the treaty. The duties of the Christians towards the Muslims are stressed especially, although the opposite might have been expected since the city contained strong forts

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1. A certain measure by which corn is measured, equivalent to $1\frac{1}{3}$ ruṭls. Cf. 'Alī, op. cit., p. 273, n.6. The ruṭl is equivalent to 408 grams. Cf. ibid., p. 272, n.4.
 2. P. 174.

and the Muslims were deficient in techniques and equipment for siege warfare.¹ It would therefore have been difficult, if not impossible, for the Muslims to enter the city by force. This made them negotiate and ask the bishop to open the gate of the city. This must have been granted to them, only in return for certain economic privileges. Such privileges are mentioned by Abū Yūsuf as follows:

"The towns people knew that they had in their possession property and income which would disappear if they agreed to pay according to capacity. They therefore refused anything but a fixed sum. When 'Iyād saw their stubbornness and the strength of their defences he despaired of taking the city by storm and granted them peace on the terms which they offered. God knows what these were."²

It would appear probable, therefore, that some phrases were suppressed at some stage to gloss over the inability of the Muslims to enter the city by force and the fact that the Christians of the city forced the Muslims to accept their conditions. This omission of Muslim weakness may be the work of al-Balādhurī himself or that of his source.

1. D.R. Hill, The Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests, (London, 1971), p. 93.

2. P. 23.

The fourth form:

Al-Balādhurī gives yet another version of the treaty:

"Bakr b. al-Haitham from al-Nufaylī 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad from Sulaymān b. 'Aṭā who said 'The inhabitants of al-Ruhā made terms stipulating that they should keep their cathedral and the building around it and agreeing not to start a new church other than what they already had, to give succour to the Muslims against their enemy, and to forfeit their right of protection in case they fail to keep any of these conditions.'"¹

This would appear to be an incomplete version of the treaty because it deals exclusively with the religious rights of the Christians and it does not specify any economic duties for them, whereas other known treaties deal with the economic duties and it was highly unusual for the Muslims not to impose economic conditions on the conquered cities. It would appear probable, therefore, that some phrases have been omitted perhaps through a fault of the compiler or the copyist or for other reasons.

1. P. 172.

The fifth form:

The author of Tārīkh al-Raqqa, Abū 'Alī Muhammad b. Sa'īd (d. 334 A.H./945 A.D.) relates as follows:

"On the authority of Dā'ūd Sulaymān b.

Sayf al-Ḥarrānī from al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. A'yan from Sulaymān b. 'Aṭa from his father from a person who saw 'Iyād when he was sent to the Jazīra, that the inhabitants of al-Ruhā made a treaty with 'Iyād as follows:

'We impose the condition that we keep our churches and our crosses and birds that take refuge in the churches, the fort of our city and the crops which belong to our churches, but we shall pay kharāj on them. 'Iyād said "We also impose (conditions)."

They said to him "Do so." He said, "I stipulate that you build no new church except what you have already, that you do not display crosses and that you ring the nāqūs (church bell) only in church, that you share your houses with the Muslims to live in, that you entertain them as guests one day and night, provide mounts for those on foot from village to village, give them good counsels and not betray them, nor make agreement with their enemies. If you keep these conditions we will keep your conditions and protect you as we protect our children and women, and if you break any of these conditions you will be slain, your women and children made slaves and we will seize your possessions." "1

1. Pp. 4-5.

The treaty is unusually full of details on all points. It may well therefore be fabricated. To provide such detailed information was not the customary behaviour of the Muslims in the early conquest of such cities. The Muslims were not in a position strong enough at this stage to impose such difficult conditions on fortified towns on the Byzantine borders.

It is always, however, possible that this treaty is so full because the author is on the spot, an inhabitant of the very area in question, and therefore able to have access to local information, not available to historians such as al-Balādhurī who is writing from Baghdād. But this is very unlikely as a hypothesis. The probability is that the treaty dates from a later period when there was resentment amongst many Muslims that Christians were given important offices especially in tax-collecting and working in prisons.¹ A feeling of jealousy and resentment may well have been behind the author wishing to remind those in power of the subordinate status of the Christians within the Islamic society.

It is clear from these different accounts of the treaty of al-Ruhā that none of them represents a complete and balanced form of an agreement between the two sides. The fifth version of the treaty should probably be omitted from any serious analysis, as it is highly suspect.

1. Cf. 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 226-233, 336-345.

As for the remaining four accounts, the first three deal only with the economic obligations imposed on the Christians by the Muslims; they make no reference whatever to any religious rights to be enjoyed by the Christians. This omission of religious rights and emphasis on economic obligations may probably be attributed to religious bias on the part of the authors or narrators.

In the first case, the authors or the narrators on whom they based their accounts may well have deliberately suppressed the part of the treaty which dealt with the Christians' religious rights, to show the superiority of the Muslims who had managed to conquer Edessa (al-Ruhā) which was called the "blessed city". Jesus had promised, according to Christian sources, that it would never be taken.

In the second case, the original treaty may well have been concerned only with economic obligations for good historical reasons. The Muslims were heavily engaged in a series of rapid, dangerous and extensive military encounters and did not have time for protracted negotiations, even with a big city such as al-Ruhā. They were swept along psychologically by the impetus of their successive victories in Syria and Iraq and would not relish any delay. These conquests needed military supplies above all, and the Muslims may well have decided to make quick economic agreements with the cities and planned to return later, perhaps, to negotiate

more fully.

More specifically, it is noteworthy that the first two versions of the treaty have identical wording, except that the latter contains additional information. It would appear probable, therefore, that the accounts of the two authors, Abū 'Ubāyd and al-Balādhurī, originate from the same source or that al-Balādhurī copied Abū 'Ubāyd, adding new information from other informants. The second and the third forms of the treaty seem similar in certain respects and complement one another in others. Together these two versions could make a "complete" treaty.

C. The peace treaty agreed between Khālīd b. al-Walīd and the city of 'Āna

In 13 A.H./634 A.D. Khālīd b. al-Walīd received Abū Bakr's order at al-Hīra to join Abū 'Ubayda in Syria. Khālīd set out for Syria and on his way he passed through many cities, some of which he conquered.¹ Others were strong/^{enough} to obtain some privileges from him and made peace treaties with him. Such cities are 'Āna and Qarqīsiyā.

1. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 110-112; Abū Yūsuf, p. 86; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 376-379.

A version of such a treaty is found in the Kitāb al-Kharāj in which Abū Yūsuf states that Muḥammad b. Ishāq and other scholars informed him that Khālīd b. al-Walīd made a peace treaty with the bitrīq of 'Āna as follows:

"Their churches or bī'a (بَيْعَة) should not be destroyed, they might ring the bells at any hour of the day or night they wished, except at the times of the Muslim prayers, and they might take out the crosses on the days of their festivals. This was on one condition that they should entertain the Muslims as guests for three days and guard them."¹

Khālīd made this treaty after he had taken money.² A peace treaty on similar lines was made with Qarqīsiyā. According to Abū Yūsuf, the Rightly Guided Caliphs never rejected these treaties.³

It is important here to note that these cities were taken on this general's famous journey from Iraq to Syria. Khālīd was in a hurry to join Abū 'Ubayda in Syria, so it is not unlikely that he gave the inhabitants of 'Āna and Qarqīsiyā these privileges to keep the peace on the eastern front. As well as by the element of haste, Khālīd b. Walīd may well have been influenced

1. P. 86.

2. No specific sum of money is mentioned.

3. P. 87.

by the strength of these two cities¹ and was thus forced to make peace treaties with them which favoured the Christians.

It is important to emphasise here that in this treaty, unlike all the others already discussed, the Christians are allowed to make public demonstration of their faith, such as ringing church bells and carrying crosses. In the other treaties they are specifically prohibited from acting in this way.

Hill regards this treaty and a similar one made with Qarqīsiyā as untrustworthy. According to his arguments, the version given by Abū Yūsuf can be rejected because 'Āna and Qarqīsiyā were conquered, not by Khālīd b. al-Walīd but by 'Iyād.² Hill also considers that the text of the alleged treaties is couched in the language of fiqh and is much too advanced for the period in question. Generally, Hill attacks any treaty which gives the Christians any privileges,³ implying that such a treaty was later fabricated by Muslims to show the tolerance of Islam towards Christianity.

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1. 'Āna possessed a strong castle which overlooked the River Euphrates; cf. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 595.
 2. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 179, 180, 175.
 3. Op. cit., pp. 95-97.

Hill's hypothesis is vulnerable in various ways. Firstly, the march made by Khālīd b. al-Walīd from Irāq to Syria is well-known and his route would go through 'Āna and Qarqīsiyā. It would be natural for him to make quick treaties with these cities en route. It is also quite natural that at a later stage 'Iyād b. Ghanam should have re-taken the cities. Thus the account of al-Balādhurī does not necessarily contradict that of Abū Yūsuf. Abū Yūsuf is a very early source and is therefore of especial value.

As for Hill's generally suspicious attitude towards treaties which grant the Christians religious privileges, it is unnecessarily extreme and simplistic.

Far from "fabricating" the idea that the Christians were allowed religious privileges, the early fuqahā' generally ruled that the Christians should be deprived of such religious rights. But the fuqahā' were prepared to accept the granting of such privileges in specific cases where individual treaties had already been made between the Muslims and the Christians in their cities.¹

Such was the legal position, but on the social level the situation was much more flexible. As will be

1. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 72-73, 80-82, 88; al-Shaybānī (d. 189 A.H.) Kitāb al-Siyar, ed. and trans. M. Khaddurī, (Maryland, 1966), p. 277; al-Shāfi'ī, (d. 204 A.H.), vol. 4, pp. 118, 126; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 298; al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf, pp. 237-240.

discussed in chapter 6, there was widespread contact and general harmony at all levels of daily life between the Muslims and the Christians in the early Islamic period. It is unlikely that in such a society harsh conditions prejudicial to Christian worship would have been imposed by the Muslims. This is especially valid for the city of 'Āna, which was a centre of the Banū Taghlib, al-Namr and a branch of Iyād, who were the strongest Arab tribes in the Jazīra and who were of course Christians.¹

2. The treaty made between the Muslims and the Christians of the Jazīra

This "treaty" is found in the work of Ibn Qudāma who writes as follows:

"On the authority of al-Khallāl,² from more than one of the 'ulamā' who said:
'The people of the Jazīra wrote to
'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ghanam the following statement: when we came from our country we asked you for our lives, and those of the people of our religion, and we imposed these terms on ourselves; not to build in our city and its environs church, convent, chapel, monk's hermitage, nor to repair those of our churches which are dilapidated nor any of those churches that are in Muslim

1. Cf. chapter I, pp. 7-8.

2. Abū Bakr Aḥmad (d. 310 A.H./923 A.D.)

quarters; not to withhold our churches from Muslims stopping there by night or day; to open their doors to travellers and wayfarers, not to shelter a spy either there or in our houses, or to hide anyone who is a traitor to the Muslims; to beat the nāqūs only gently in our churches; not to display a cross on them, not to raise our voices in prayer or reading in our churches in accordance with what the Muslims have prohibited, not to carry in procession a cross or our book, not to take out Easter or Palm Sunday procession; not to raise our voices over our dead, not to show fires with them in the markets of the Muslims nor bring our funerals near them; not to sell wine nor parade idolatry in the company of Muslims, not to entice a Muslim to our religion nor invite anyone to it, not to keep slaves who have been the property of Muslims, not to prevent any relative from embracing Islam if he wishes; to keep our religion wherever we are; not to resemble the Muslims by wearing the galansuwa, the turban, shoes, nor the parting of the hair, nor in their way of riding, not to use their language nor be called by their kunyas; to cut our hair in front and divide our forelocks; to tie the zanānīr round our waist; not to engrave Arabic on our seals; not to ride on saddles, not to keep arms nor put them in our houses; not to wear swords; to honour Muslims in their gatherings; to guide them on the road, to stand up in public meetings when they wish to; not to make our houses higher than theirs; not to teach our children the

Koran; not to be partners with Muslims except in trade and the Muslims should be in charge of it; to entertain every Muslim traveller and feed him three days. We impose these terms on ourselves, our offspring, our wives and our houses. And if we violate any of the conditions of this agreement, then we forfeit your protection and you are at liberty to treat us as enemies and rebels."

When Ibn Ghanam had written along these lines to 'Umar I, 'Umar ordered him to add two points:

"That they will not take any slaves that are already in the possession of the Muslims; and anyone who strikes a Muslim will forfeit his protection."¹

Ibn Qudāma (d. 620 A.H./1223 A.D.) mentions the above treaty in his work al-Mughnī which is a treatise of Ḥanbalite fiqh. As well as the desire to spread Ḥanbalite ideas, Ibn Qudāma has a strong anti-Christian bias. He lived in the period of the Crusades and witnessed at first hand harsh treatment from the

1. Al-Mughnī, ed. M.R. Riḍā, (Cairo, 1367), vol. 8, pp. 524-525. The same account is in Aḥkām ahl al-Dhimma of Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, vol. 2, pp. 659-660, except the first sentence which is "When you came to our country....." instead of "When we came from our country."

Frankish Christians.¹

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 A.H./1350 A.D.) mentions the same account of the treaty in his work Aḥkām ahl al-Dhimma. He wrote his book of fiqh to organize the existence of the "People of the Book" in the Islamic lands. He lived in a period in which there was bitter antagonism between the Muslims and the Christians. He studied under Ibn Taymiyya (d. 711 A.H./1311 A.D.) whose views are well known anti-Christian.² Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya who was fanatically hostile to Christianity overtly accused the local Christians in Northern Syria of having been spies for the Crusaders and urged their conversion to Islam.

It is not surprising, therefore, that these two authors set out deliberately to write the above treaty. It is aimed at justifying the anti-Christian measures taken by Muslim leaders as the Crusades progressed and as the complicity of local Christians in anti-Muslim

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1. In 551 A.H./1156 A.D. the Banu Qudāma moved from Jammā'īl (near Jerusalem) to Damascus. According to chroniclers, this move was prompted by the bad treatment the Muslims were receiving from the Franks. (EI² art: Ibn Qudāma al-Maḥdisī).
 2. Ibn Taymiyya wrote many books against the Christians, for example Takhjīl ahl al-Injīl wa'l nahj al-Ṣaḥīḥ fi'l-Radd 'alā man badala dīn 'Īsā b. Maryam.

activities became more apparent.¹ It is interesting to note that the above treaty is very similar to treaties mentioned by Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571 A.H./1175 A.D.) who in his version of a letter to Abū 'Ubayda,² the main Muslim general in Syria, and in the treaty he cites for the people of Shām,³ even has identical sentences to those

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1. For example, Nūr al-Dīn Zankī (d. 569 A.H./1174 A.D.) "ordered the Christians to wear the zunnār and forbade them to use saddles when riding on horses." Cf. A.S. Tritton, The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects, (London, 1930), p. 121, also pp. 122-123. Nūr al-Dīn also exacted a terrible vengeance on the treacherous Christians of Edessa whom he put to death or carried into slavery and whose property he confiscated. Cf. Ibn Wāṣil, (d. 697 A.H.), Mufarrīj al-Kurūb, ed. J. al-Shayyāl, (Cairo, 1953), vol. 1, pp. 94, 110-111; EI¹ art. Nūr al-Dīn Zangī; ibid., art., Orfea; Chronography, pp. 266-267, 269-273, 281-282, 289.
 2. Tārīkh Dimashq, ed. S. al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 504-506; idem, al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, ed. A.Q. Muṣṭafa (Damascus, 1330 A.H.), vol. 1, pp. 149.
 3. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 178; al-Ṭarṭūshī, Sirāj al-Mulūk (Cairo, 128 A.H.), p. 135; Aḥmad al-Ibshīhī, al-Mustaṭraf fī Kull Fann Mustadraf (Cairo, 1929), vol. 1, p. 152; Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 A.H.) al-Muhalla (Beirut, n.d.), vol. 7, pp. 346-347.

quoted by Ibn Qudāma and Ibn al-Qayyim.

The conditions mentioned in this treaty are suspicious on a number of counts. It was not usual of course for the conquered people to decide the conditions of the treaty on the basis of which they would be admitted to enjoy the protection of the victors. Moreover, it would be extremely unlikely for the Christians not to ask for any rights, especially those concerned with the practice of their religion. Besides, it is absurd to assume that it was the conquered Christians who prevented themselves from possessing any knowledge of the Koran and who promised 'Iyād that they would pay tribute. It is to be expected that the conqueror would take such an initiative himself. In addition to that, this treaty is made with a nameless town or towns in the Jazīra. This is also highly unsatisfactory since other treaties mention specific towns by name.

Furthermore, there would have been no need for the inclusion of a condition about clothing to distinguish the Christians from the Muslims at the time of the conquest. Such a difference would have already existed before Islam.¹ The people of the cities of the Jazīra wore different clothing from the Bedouin Arabs who came

1. Ibn Mattī, p. 55; al-Sa'rdī, vol. 2, (FO.Vol.13)p.630. Tritton, op. cit., p. 115; Wigram, The Assyrian Church, p. 236; Browne, The Eclipse of Islam, p. 45.

to conquer them.¹ Ibn Qudāma and Ibn al-Qayyim cannot even write the name of the Muslim leader correctly; they write 'Abd al-Raḥman instead of 'Iyād.

It is unlikely that the Muslims would have ever agreed to a condition which positively prevented anyone from possessing knowledge of the Koran since Allah says, "Invite all to the way of the Lord...."² "Proclaim the message which hath been sent to thee from the Lord."³ The Prophet Muḥammad says, "The best of you is that who learned the Koran and taught it."⁴

It is ridiculous to believe that as the treaty says the Christians were prohibited from using Arabic or engraving Arabic on their seals. This is inconceivable in the Jazīra which was populated by many Arab Christian tribes. Therefore, for the above reasons, it is extremely likely that this is fabricated legislation designed for the conditions of the two writers' own time rather than for the first Muslim century. No other Muslim or Christian sources contain this treaty.

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1. The only confusion would arise when trying to distinguish a member of an Arab Christian tribe from his Muslim counterpart.
 2. Sura 16:125.
 3. Sura 5:70.
 4. Al-Shaybānī, Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr, ed. S. al-Munajjid, (Cairo, 1957), vol. 1, p. 206.

3. The peace treaty made by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb with the Banu Taghlib

As is well-known, in pre-Islamic times the Banu Taghlib were very great in war;¹ because of this power the Arabs used to say "If Islam had come later, the Banu Taghlib would have swallowed the Arabs."²

When the Muslims came to conquer the Jazīra, they tried to force the Banu Taghlib to renounce their Christian faith and become Muslims. Otherwise, they would have to pay the jizya. The Banu Taghlib refused to do this and were on the point of leaving for some Byzantine territory when certain Muslims advised 'Umar to be tolerant to them and said to him: "Banu Taghlib are a body of Arabs too proud to pay the jizya and they are fierce in warfare; do not let them go to the enemy... the enemy could be enriched by them..."³ 'Umar I called the Banu Taghlib and made a peace treaty with them.

The main version of this treaty is given in the Kitāb al-Kharāj of Abū Yūsuf:

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1. Al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-'Arūs, (Cairo, 1306 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 414 (art. ghalaba); Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-'Arab, (Cairo, 1300 A.H.), vol. 2, p. 145 (art. ghalaba).
 2. Al-Tabrīzī, op. cit., p. 108.
 3. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 181-182; Abū Yūsuf, p. 68; Qudāma, p. 89; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 4, p. 120.

"Umār b. al-Khaṭṭāb made peace with them (the Banu Taghlib) on the following conditions: That none of their children be brought up in the Christian faith; that instead of jizya a double ṣadaqa tax should be imposed on them at the rate of two ewes from any number of sheep exceeding 40, and not exceeding 120, and four ewes from more; that they pay double the rate due to be paid by a Muslim on camels and cattle, and that it should be paid by males and females but not by minors; that they pay for the land which they owned when the agreement was made, twice as much as a Muslim pays."¹

The same version is also given in the work also entitled Kitāb al-Kharāj by Yaḥyā b. Ādam.²

In connection with this treaty, al-Balādhurī gives the following conditions "That they agree not to immerse a child or compel him to accept their faith and to pay a double ṣadaqa."³

It would be reasonable to assume that a treaty like this was made with the Banu Taghlib. In essence it accords with the spirit of the treaty which according to some sources the Prophet had made earlier with the ambassador of the Banu Taghlib.⁴

1. P. 68.

2. P. 48.

3. P. 182.

4. Ibn Sa'd, Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, (Beirut, 1967), vol. 1, p. 316. This peace treaty will be discussed/

The terms of this treaty show a tolerant attitude towards the Banu Taghlib on the part of 'Umar. He had good reasons for granting them special privileges; first of all, the Banu Taghlib had a firm position in the Jazīra with many branches and subdivisions of the tribe settled there. They were obviously very powerful. The sources call them "unassailable".¹ The very existence, moreover, of the Banu Taghlib between the two great empires of the Near East, one of which was Christian and the other which was also still hostile, was a great danger to the Muslims.

III. The peace treaties in the Christian sources

There is very little information in Christian sources on the treaties made by the Muslims with the Christians in the Jazīra. What information does exist is analysed below.

Some Christian sources mention that Ishūyāb II, the Nestorian Patriarch of Ctesiphon between the years 7-26 A.H./ 628-646 A.D. sent many presents to the Prophet Muḥammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. With Muḥammad he made a covenant which stated that:

"All the Christians under the authority of Ishūyāb and his successors must be under the Muslims' protection and they have the

/discussed in detail later in this chapter on page 89.

1. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 182-184; Abū Yūsuf, p. 68.

right to pray and build their churches."¹

From Abū Bakr and 'Umar, Ishūyāb received a covenant to assure the Muslims' protection for the Christians in his care and to exempt him and his personal servants from any jizya.² The same source mentions that Mar Amma the Nestorian Patriarch between 27-30 A.H./647-650 A.D. obtained a covenant from 'Alī b. Abī Tālib which he showed to every governor so that they would comply with it.³

Bar-Hebraeus mentions that an agreement was made by Ishūyāb II with the Prophet as follows:

"It was stipulated that the Christians should be protected from their foes; that they should not be compelled to fight for the Arabs; that they might keep their manners and laws; that the tax on the poor should not exceed four dirhams and that the tax on the merchants and the wealthy should be twelve dirhams and that a Christian woman in service should not be forced to give up her religion nor to neglect prayer and fasting."⁴

Probably these covenants were forged at a later time by the Nestorians for political reasons connected with their own time, rather than the period about which they

1. Ibn Mattī, p. 54; Marī, pp. 61-62.

2. Marī, p. 61.

3. Marī, p. 61.

4. Vol. 2, p. 118.

are writing. In particular, they may have wished to ingratiate themselves with the Muslim authorities. The original Islamic sources do not mention any covenant from Muḥammad or the Rightly Guided Caliphs with the Christians in the Jazīra and Iraq. Nor do other important Christian sources such as Theophanes, Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē and Thomas al-Marjī, make any reference to such a covenant.¹

It is impossible that the Prophet would have given such a covenant to the Christians in the Jazīra or Iraq while Islam was still limited to small areas in the Arabian Peninsula.²

IV. The reaction of the Christians of the Jazīra to the Islamic conquest

An attempt will now be made to assess the reaction of the various elements of the population in the Jazīra

1. Voobus is clearly uncritical when he writes:

"A tradition reports his (Ishūyāb) foresight in making an agreement with the invading Arabs."

Cf. History of the School of Nisibis, (Louvain, (1965), p. 297.

2. It is also probably unlikely that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib gave a covenant to Mar Amma, because 'Alī was caliph between 35-40 A.H./656-660 A.D. while Mar Amma was in the post between 27-30 A.H./647-650 A.D.

towards the Islamic conquest. The sources are not very detailed on this subject but a tentative picture may be pieced together from the various references in the texts, both Muslim and Christian.¹

The Arab Christian tribes who were settled in the Jazīra reacted promptly to the news of the conquest of Mecca (8 A.H./629 A.D.). Among the many Arab Christian tribes who sent deputations to make an agreement with the Muslims were tribes from the Jazīra including the Banu Taghlib. According to Ibn Sa'd, the Taghlib deputation consisted of sixteen people, both Muslims and Christians; the latter were wearing golden crosses. The deputation settled in the house of the daughter of al-Ḥārith, Ramla. The Prophet made a peace treaty with them. Ibn Sa'd writes as follows:

"To acknowledge their religion on one condition, which was that they must not make their children Christians."²

A similar account is given in al-Ṭabarī who is quoting Sayf b. 'Umar, who adds the following additional information:

"The conditions applied only to the deputation and those who sent them."³

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1. Muslim historians give a fuller treatment of this subject, whilst Christian sources provide only scanty information.
 2. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 316.
 3. Vol. 4, pp. 55-56.

This account accords well with what is known of the Prophet's treatment of other potentially dangerous opponents. He was aware of the strength of the Banu Taghlib and of the importance of keeping them away from any alliance with the Byzantines. The action mentioned in this narrative was logical in that situation.

Whether or not such a treaty was actually made, its effects were not destined to last for long. It is well-known that during the rida period, a Christian woman called Sajāh (سَجَاح) the mother of Ṣādir, claimed to be a prophetess and soothsayer. She belonged to the Banu Tamīm through her father, whilst her mother belonged to Banu Taghlib. She left the Jazīra for al-Yamāma (اليمامة) with an armed detachment of Arab Christian tribes.¹ Their aim was to lend support to Musaylama (مُسَيْلَمَة) who also claimed to be a prophet. Sajāh

1. Such as Taghlib (led by al-Hudhayl b. 'Umrān (الهذيل بن عمران)); Rabī'a and al-Namr (led by 'Uqqa b. Hilāl (عَقَّة بن هلال)); Shaybān (led by al-Sulayl b. Qays (السليل بن قيس)) and Iyād (led by Zayd b. Fulān (زيد بن فلان)).

managed to make a military alliance with Musaylama after marrying him, but the situation did not continue for long because the Muslims managed to overrun them and she returned to her uncles in the Jazīra together with the Arab tribes who had accompanied her.¹ The Taghlibīs who had migrated with Sajāh supported the Persians in al-Anbār and 'Ayn al-Tamr in 12 A.H./633 A.D.²

After the fall of Musaylama, the Arab Christian tribes in the Jazīra began looking for other ways of resisting the Muslims. They caused many problems for the Muslims at this time. When the Muslims decided to conquer Syria in 13 A.H./634 A.D. the Christian tribes of the Jazīra helped Heraclius to besiege the Muslims in Ḥimṣ and they sent an army to Hīt to help its inhabitants against the Muslims.³ The Muslims retaliated by attacking the Arab tribes in their own country, the Jazīra. So they left Heraclius quickly, returned home⁴ and began a war against the Muslims there.

The resistance shown by the Arab Christian tribes in the Jazīra to the Muslims could manifest itself in support for the Byzantines against the Muslims. When the Muslims came to the Jazīra, the leaders of the Arab

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 274-275; al-Balādhurī, pp. 99-100.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 376-379; al-Balādhurī, p. 110.
 3. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 38; Ibn A'tham, vol. 1, p. 220; al-Azdī, Futūḥ al-Shām, (Calcutta, 1854), p. 160.
 4. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 38.

Christian tribes there, such as Nawfal b. Māzin (نوفل بن مازن), al-Fraṭḍ b. Taghlib (الفرّيد بن تغلب), Huzām b. ‘Abd Allah (حزام بن عبد الله), al-Ashja‘ b. Wā’il (أشجع بن وائل), Maysara b. Wā’il (ميسرة بن وائل), Maysara b. ‘Āṣim (ميسرة بن عاصم) and Qārib b. al-Aṣamm (قارب بن الأصم) held a council in Ra’s al-‘Ayn to discuss what had happened as a result of the Muslim conquest of their territory. Later, they accepted the offer of the Byzantine governor of that city and made a military alliance with him to fight the Muslims.¹

Other groups of these tribes under the leadership of al-Sulṭān b. Sāriyya al-Taghlibī (السلطان بن سارية التغلبي) went to the same governor saying: "You know that the Muslims have come to our country and are aiming at us more than at you. Their aim is that we embrace their religion. We refused their religion and want you and your army to come out of the city so that we can help each other in fighting them."² The governor accepted their offer and signed an agreement.

The Muslims tried not to let the governor of Ra’s al-‘Ayn derive the benefit of the potential military support of these Arab Christian tribes. One of the Muslim leaders in the Jazīra, al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba, held a meeting with the above-mentioned Christian Arab tribal leaders and asked them to join the Muslim side. Some of

1. Al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, p. 106.

2. Ibid., p. 98.

them accepted his offer while others, such as Iyād b. Nizār refused and moved from the Jazīra and joined the Byzantines.¹ They stayed on the Byzantine side until 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb threatened Heraclius. In 19 A.H./ 640 A.D. he wrote to him as follows:

"If you do not turn them away from your country, I will cause the ruin of every Christian."²

Al-Ṭabarī says when quoting 'Umar's letter:

"If you do not move them out I will torture the Christians and send them to you."³

So Heraclius sent the Banu Iyād away and they returned to the Jazīra. Some of them went to the Byzantine governor of the Jazīra to whom their leader 'Āṣim b. Rawāḥa (عاصم بن رواح) had written saying:

"I have come from the Byzantine country to your country to serve you."⁴

According to al-Ṭabarī, not all the Banu Iyād left Byzantine territory, some of them stayed,⁵ and helped

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1. Al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, p. 111; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 54-55; al-Mas'ūdī, al-Tanbīh, p. 205; al-Balādhurī, p. 164.
 2. Al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, p. 112.
 3. Vol. 4, p. 55.
 4. Al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, pp. 140-141.
 5. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 55.

the Byzantines in their war against the Muslims during the Umayyad period. Yāqut al-Ḥamawī relates that in the reign of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (105-125 A.H./724-743 A.D.) the Muslims captured one of the Banu Iyād. They brought him to Hishām who was in Ḥarrān. When the Muslims passed by Edessa, the captive asked them to let him pray in "its church", which they did. In the court of Hishām the man refused to become a Muslim, so Hishām ordered him to be executed.¹

In certain places in the Jazīra the Arab Christian tribes tried to depend on themselves by making alliances with one another. For this reason, in 18 A.H./639 A.D., one branch of the Banu Taghlib made an alliance with al-Namr against the Muslims in Ṣiffīn, but the Muslims "raided them and threw some of them into the river. These begged the Muslims to be kind to them, but the Muslims did not leave them and shouted at them "You must drown, you must drown." It seems that the Muslim leader encouraged his men to drown them all by saying "drowning for burning" to remind them of a time before Islam when a band of Bakr b. Wā'il were burnt. So the Muslims drowned the whole group on this occasion. Later, they told ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb that they had said what they had said as a proverb and not as revenge.² However, this action clearly shows that the old feuds between

1. Op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 869-870.

2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 475-476.

Bakr and Taghlib had not been forgotten.

The above evidence should not be taken to imply that all the Arab Christian tribes in the Jazīra were against the Muslims either by collaborating with the Byzantines or by allying with one another. There were some branches of Taghlib, Iyād, and al-Namr, who embraced Islam and began fighting the Byzantines in Tikrīt and Mosul.¹

It is clear, however, from the evidence in the Islamic sources that the Arab Christian tribes generally resisted the Muslim conquest. The unanswered question is why they should have acted in this way. Probably they were motivated by the fear that the Muslims would take their territory away from them. Inter-tribal rivalry may well also have been an important factor. The Banu Taghlib and the other tribes of the Jazīra were proud of their independence and tribal past and they resented the fact that since the coming of Islam the Quraysh had become so powerful. Many of the Jazīra tribesmen were said to be hard and tough warriors who were too proud to defer to the Muslims.² They probably preferred to keep their independence under the Byzantine Empire rather than to be ruled by the Quraysh tribe. Initially, the Jazīra tribes must have thought that the Byzantine Empire was so strong that the Muslims would

1. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 35.

2. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 181-182.

not be able to conquer it. They were also probably afraid that if they left the Byzantines without assistance, the Byzantines would punish them. Later on, however, when the Jazīra tribes saw that the Muslims had conquered the Byzantines on numerous occasions, they defected in good numbers to the Muslim side.¹

Thus it would appear that as time went on the loyalty of the Arab Christian tribes to their faith was rather superficial, as will be shown more conclusively in chapter 3. Their attitude was opportunistic and pragmatic.

There was, moreover, spirited resistance on the part of the peasants of the Jazīra, who wanted to defend their land and cattle. According to al-Balādhurī, 'Iyād raided the outskirts of the city of al-Raqqa where groups of Arab tribesmen and peasants were encamped.² This suggests that the indigenous rural population were gathering together to defend themselves. More explicitly, al-Balādhurī declares in another passage that 'Iyād conquered the Jazīra and its towns by capitulation but its land by force.³

1. Al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, p. 117.

2. P. 173. Cf. Qudāma, p. 89.

3. P. 175, also cf. pp. 174, 176.

Bar-Hebraeus states that Mar Utha, the Jacobite leader in Tikrīt between 3-29 A.H./625-649 A.D., opened the gates of Tikrīt castle to the Muslims in order to avoid bloodshed and that he succeeded in his attempt.¹ Also Marī b. Sulaymān states that the Muslims managed to enter Mosul with the help of Mar Amma (d. 27 A.H./647 A.D.) the Nestorian Patriarch, who supplied the stores for the Muslim army.² Shedd relates that "Nestorians and Monophysites welcomed the Arab conquest."³

Such evidence as this is rather suspicious, since the earliest Christian sources, such as Dionysius and Theophanes, mention no such active collaboration on the part of the Christian clergy. Indeed, the earliest Christian sources mention very little at all about what presumably was too painful a subject to be discussed. Nor do the Islamic sources refer to the clergy acting in this way. Conceivably the Christians may have fabricated these accounts later to flatter their Muslim governors and avoid persecution.

The Islamic sources such as al-Wāqidī and Ibn al-A'tham point out that the clergy actively tried to stop the Muslims conquering the Jazīra. Al-Wāqidī says that when the Muslims conquered Kafartūthā and began fighting

1. Vol. 2, p. 126.

2. P. 62.

3. Islam and the Oriental Churches, (Philadelphia, 1904), p. 106.

the Byzantine governor, "the famous Patriarch, with all the priests, deacons, and bishops in the Jazīra, joined with the Byzantine governor to encourage his army against the Muslims. The Patriarch began warning the army and said, 'If anyone tries to escape I will excommunicate him so Christ will not accept him.'"¹

On another occasion al-Wāqidī mentions that one of the bishops left his hermitage and came to exhort the Christians to fight against the Muslims and ordered them to start a holy war. Besides, he said to other bishops, "Now it is not the time for worship,"² so he took many of them and went to Naṣībīn whose people gathered around him. After warning and ordering them to start the holy war, he went to Ra's al-ʿAyn where he did the same thing. Al-Wāqidī mentions that the priests, deacons and the monks in Āmid climbed the forts of Āmid to fight the Muslims.³ Ibn Aʿtham mentions that the bishops and priests from the Jazīra joined Heraclius to fight the Muslims.⁴

In the absence of balancing information from early Christian sources, it is difficult to decide where the truth lies. Certainly, it could be argued that if there had been collaboration from the Christian clergy, the

1. Vol. 2, p. 138.

2. Vol. 2, p. 125.

3. Ibid., p. 156.

4. Vol. 1, p. 230.

Muslim sources would have been glad to mention it.

Initially, the Byzantine governors of the Jazīra attempted some kind of accommodation with the Muslims, according to the Christian sources. The Byzantine governor of the Jazīra, John, who was known as Cataeus "visited the headquarters of 'Iyād b. Ghanam at Qinnasrīn and agreed to pay the Muslims 100,000 gold coins yearly on the condition that the Arabs would not cross the Euphrates river either militarily or peacefully."

John collected the fund for the first year and sent it to 'Iyād. On learning of the agreement, Heraclius was understandably enraged and summoned John from the province. Heraclius reprimanded John severely for coming to an agreement with the Muslims without his prior approval and forthwith sent him into exile. In his place he appointed Ptolemy as a general and Patricius as a governor of the Jazīra.¹

No account of such an accommodation by the Byzantine military governors is to be found in the original Islamic sources. According to the Islamic sources, the Byzantine military governors who were the leaders of the Byzantine army in the cities made strenuous efforts to stop the Muslims conquering the Jazīra.

1. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 521 (A.M. 6128), Agabius, op. cit., p. 344; Michael, vol. 2, p. 420. The latter two sources appear to have copied Theophanes.

Al-Wāqidī mentions that John, the governor of al-Raqqā, "called up his army against the Muslims."¹ The governor of Āmid, who was a woman, gathered her senior officials and said to them: "The Arabs have occupied your land and are aiming to conquer your city which is the key to Diyār Bakr. If they take Āmid they will manage to conquer all of Diyār Bakr."² Having expressed her fears she ordered them to fight the Arabs.

Luke, the governor of Qinnāsīn, gathered the inhabitants of his city and noticing that they were in favour of coming to an agreement with the Arabs said: "Oh children of al-Aṣfar (al-Rūm) what do you want me to do with these Arabs who have come to conquer our country after conquering al-Shām?" In answering this question the inhabitants said: "We have been informed that the Arabs possess knightly virtues and will offer us protection."³ The Arabs' good reputation in dealing with conquered cities may well have been the reason for the inhabitants of Qinnāsīn suggesting to their governor that he should make peace with the Muslims. The governor accepted this proposal and suggested a peace treaty to last for one year, hoping that during that period the Byzantines would have enough time to send more military help. The Muslims refused these peace terms and the war

1. Vol. 2, p. 98.

2. Ibid., pp. 155-156.

3. Vol. 1, pp. 101-102.

was resumed. Indeed, the Byzantines sent an army under the leadership of Jubala b. al-Ayham al-Ghassānī.¹

Information is also available for other cities. For example, the governor of Qarqīsiyā ordered his officials to prepare themselves to fight the Arabs. This they did, and the governor himself was killed in the fighting.² Moreover, the governor of Mārdīn allied himself with the governor of Ḥarrān and the governor of Kafartūtā to attack 'Iyād during the night, but 'Iyād managed to overcome them.³

Al-Balādhurī writes about 'Ayn al-Warda (Ra's al-'Ayn):

"Then one of the governors of the city appeared to the Muslims and cursed them and said that they were different from those they had met before."⁴

Ibn A'tham mentions that the people of al-Ruhā threatened Metolīs their governor by saying either he should ask the Muslims for peace or they would surrender the city to them.⁵ The implication here is that the governor wanted to fight and not to give up the city to the Muslims. The above accounts from the Muslim sources clearly suggest that the Byzantine military governors adopted a hostile

1. Ibid., 102-103.

2. Vol. 2, p. 113.

3. Vol. 2, pp. 117-120.

4. P. 176. Cf. Ibn A'tham, pp. 336-337.

5. P. 330.

stance towards the Muslims whom they wished to resist.

Taking both Christian and Islamic sources together, it would appear reasonable to assume that there was strong resistance to the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra, except of course as has been made clear in earlier discussions, from the urban population who, it appears, were keen to come to an agreement with the Muslims. It is also possible that at the very beginning, as the Christian sources indicate, the Byzantine governors tried to make agreements with the Muslims.

It is clear from the above analysis that there was widespread and strong resistance on the part of certain Christian groups in the Jazīra to the Muslim conquest. The Arab Christian tribes fought fiercely to keep their independence and their lands. The Christian clergy, as representatives of the church, exhorted their congregation to fight the Muslims and they themselves joined the Christian armies to encourage morale and religious zeal amongst the troops.

The peasants put up a strong fight too, in defence of their land and cattle, and were spurred on in their struggle by the clergy. As for the Byzantine governors, they fought hard to prevent the Muslims from taking the cities of the Jazīra but they did not have enough forces to hold out indefinitely.

The fight for control of the Jazīra was short-lived but fierce. Al-Ṭabarī was clearly mistaken in his judging the conquest of the Jazīra to be "the easiest

of all the conquests."¹

1. Vol. 4, p. 54.

CHAPTER III

THE BANU TAGHLIB DURING THE PERIOD OF THE
RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS AND THE Umayyads
(11-132 A.H./632-750 A.D.)

During the period under discussion in this thesis the regions of the Jazīra inhabited by the Banu Taghlib lay between Qarqīsiyā, Sinjār, Naşibīn and Mosul in the north and Tikrīt and 'Āna in the south. This area formed a kind of peninsula, bound as it was by the rivers Tigris, al-Khābūr and Euphrates.¹ Many clans of Taghlib lived on the right bank of the Euphrates.²

The activities of Taghlib in the above-mentioned area will be discussed in detail in this chapter in the period 11-132 A.H./632-750 A.D.

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1. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 314, 316-321, 326-328;
Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 199, 201, 206;
Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 921,
vol. 2, pp. 272, 690; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit.,
(Cairo, 1301 A.H.), vol. 4, pp. 151-152;
H. Lammens, Le Chantre des Omiades, (Journal
Asiatique, (Paris, 1894), vol. IV, pp. 96, 121 .
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 311, 314, 376, 379,
382-383, 475; al-Azdī, op. cit., p. 59;
al-Balādhurī, pp. 110-112; supplement to EI¹,
no. 5 (art:- Taghlib); Abū Tammām, Naqā'id
Jarīr wa'l Akḥṭal, ed. I. Salīhanī, (Beirut,
1922), p. 29; al-Akḥṭal, p. 134.

I. Caliphal policy towards the Banu Taghlib

As already discussed,¹ 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb made a peace treaty with the Banu Taghlib. This treaty obliged this tribe not to baptise their children as Christians. For motives of their own, the Banu Taghlib did not observe this condition and went on baptising their children.² According to al-Sarakhsī (d. 490 A.H./1097 A.D.) 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb realized that the Banu Taghlib would not be willing to keep this condition when he made the peace treaty with them. According to al-Sarakhsī, he imposed such a difficult condition on them and hoped that by breaking it the Banu Taghlib would give his successors a pretext in the future for abolishing the treaty. Al-Sarakhsī believes that 'Umar was unwilling at the time to make the peace treaty with them at all.³

As other Islamic sources do not corroborate the views of al-Sarakhsī and indeed are silent on this, it is probable that the author reflects in these views the attitudes and policies of later caliphs and governors towards the Banu Taghlib. Even if the conditions of this

1. Cf. chapter 2.

2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 68; Qudāma, p. 89; Abū 'Ubayd, pp. 39-41; al-Balādhurī, p. 182; Ibn Ādam, p. 48.

3. Al-Nukat, (Hyderabad, 1378 A.H.), p. 112. This author on Ḥanafite fiqh often provides in his works useful historical information.

peace treaty were authentic, the long survival of Christianity in this tribe shows that the condition not to baptise their children was certainly not observed.

Abū Yūsuf states that 'Umar ordered that the Christians of the Banu Taghlib should be treated harshly because, as he said, "They are Arabs and should have become Muslims."¹ Clearly Abū Yūsuf is implying here that 'Umar felt it a disgrace that Arabs should not be Muslims and was angered by the Banu Taghlib's refusal to embrace Islam. This is the statement of a faqīh but is not in agreement with early Islamic historical sources, according to which 'Umar tolerated the Banu Taghlib and gave them special privileges for a number of sound political reasons.² Tritton is clearly rash in accepting this narrative of Abū Yūsuf as true.³

Turning to the caliphate of 'Alī, al-Sarakhsī relates that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib tried to abolish the peace treaty made by 'Umar when the Banu Taghlib broke the condition, but he decided against it lest he should be accused of disagreeing with 'Umar.⁴ This narrative is also of rather dubious authenticity since it is well-known that during his time as caliph, 'Alī was occupied with the first civil war (35-40 A.H./656-661 A.D.).

1. Pp. 69, 78.

2. Cf. chapter 2, pp. 84-86.

3. Op. cit., p. 89.

4. Op. cit., p. 112.

It is very unlikely that he would wish to make the situation worse by abolishing the peace treaty made with the strongest Christian Arab tribe in the Jazīra.¹ The narrative is probably a reflection of later Muslim hostility and envy towards the Banu Taghlib who had enjoyed preferential treatment to the annoyance of the Muslims, especially the fūqahā.² The same hostility is revealed in an account given by al-Balādhurī who writes that because the Banu Taghlib broke the peace treaty, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib declared:

"If Banu Taghlib were left to my judgement, I would kill their fighters and take their children captive because they have violated the treaty by baptising their children, thus forfeiting their right to protection."³

Qudāma b. Ja'far⁴ and Ibn Qudāma⁵ also give this narrative.

It is perhaps not surprising that the Shī'ite writer, Naṣr b. Muzāḥim (d. 212 A.H./827 A.D.) attributes the

1. Cf. chapter 2, p. 84, 89; and chapter 6, p. 275.

2. Al-Saraksī himself was strongly anti-Christian. Cf. the introduction of the editor of Shaybānī's Siyar, Majīd Khaddurī, p. 58.

3. P. 183.

4. P. 89.

5. Op. cit., vol. 8, p. 513.

making of the peace treaty with the Banu Taghlib to 'Alī, and not 'Umar. He goes on to say that on hearing that the Banu Taghlib had broken the peace treaty, 'Alī said:

"In the name of Allah, if I could get at the Banu Taghlib I would kill their fighters and take their children captives."

The account of Naṣr b. Muzāḥim goes on to relate that when 'Alī went to the country inhabited by the Banu Taghlib, the warmth of their reception so delighted him that he changed his mind about his proposed harsh treatment of them.¹

This version of the signing of the treaty with the Banu Taghlib given by Naṣr b. Muzāḥim is at variance with all the other early sources which all attribute the treaty to 'Umar, not 'Alī. Naṣr is the only historian who accords 'Alī such an important role, probably because of his own Shī'ite leanings,² although Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi echoes this alleged hostility felt by 'Alī towards the Banu Taghlib when he attributes to 'Alī the following declaration to the Banu Taghlib:

1. Waq'at Ṣiffīn, ed. A.S. Hārūn, (Cairo, 1382 A.H.), p. 146.

2. Cf. the arguments contained in Mīzān al-I'tidāl, vol. 4, p. 253; Tārīkh Baghdād, vol. 13, p. 282; E.L. Petersen, 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, (Copenhagen, 1964), p. 101.

"Oh, you Arab pigs, if I could get the caliphate, I would impose the jizya on you."¹

It is likely that the treaty was kept by 'Umar's immediate successors 'Uthmān and 'Alī. This hypothesis is supported by the evidence of al-Shaybānī (d. 189 A.H.) who informed Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193 A.H./786-809 A.D.) of the fact that the successors of 'Umar did not try to abolish the treaty that 'Umar had made with the Banu Taghlib.²

The sources are silent about whether or not the peace treaty made with the Banu Taghlib was observed in the period from the end of the caliphate of 'Alī (40 A.H./660 A.D.) to that of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (99 A.H./717 A.D.). It is clear that in the Umayyad period generally, the Banu Taghlib enjoyed a very good relationship with the caliphs.³ When 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz came to power (99-101 A.H./717-720 A.D.), this relationship deteriorated.⁴ Taking advantage of the

1. Op. cit., vol. 7, p. 280 (1st ed.).

2. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 174.

3. Cf. later discussion on pp.

4. For a detailed analysis of the reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, cf. 'Abd al-Jabbār Nājjī, "'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz" (ed. in The Journal of the Arts College of Basra University, (Najaf, 1975), vol. 10, pp. 164-179; W.W. Barthold, "Caliph 'Umar II and the Conflicting Reports on his Personality", ed. in The Islamic Quarterly, (London, 1971), vol. 15, pp. 69-95.

fact that the Banu Taghlib had probably grown weaker,¹ at this time 'Umar II apparently intended to stop taking the double ṣadaqa from them, demanding instead the jizya. If they refused to pay it, he said that he would wage war against them. The Banu Taghlib said to him, "Are you treating us like slaves?" to which he replied, "We will never take anything from you except the jizya."² However, 'Umar died before effecting any change. This account is perfectly consistent with what is known of the religious policies of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz who was famous for his attempt to coerce the Arab Christians into embracing the faith of Islam, profiting especially from their weakness.³

In spite of all the above evidence about the existence of the double ṣadaqa in the peace treaty,

1. Cf. discussion in chapter 4. In particular, it appears that the Banu Taghlib had sent an embassy to 'Umar II asking him to treat them kindly. This is in marked contrast with their previous attitude.
2. Ibn Anas, al-Mudawwana, (Cairo, 1323 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 283; Ibn al-Qayyim, vol. 1, pp. 78-79. These sources, the one probably based on the other, appear to be the only ones which discuss this aspect of 'Umar II's fiscal and religious policies.
3. Cf. chapters 4 and 6.

there is one dissenting voice. Saḥnūm b. Sa'īd al-Tanūkhī (the relater of al-Mudawwana for Ibn Anas) implicitly denies the existence of the peace treaty at all and says, "If the ṣadaqa had been taken doubly from the Christians of the Banu Taghlib we would have been aware of it, whereas in fact I have not heard anyone of Malik's companions mention it."¹

Nau made a serious mistake when he claimed that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was the first who took the double ṣadaqa from the Banu Taghlib. Indeed he is also probably unduly suspicious when he attacks Muslim historians accusing them of distorting facts and attributing to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb the actions of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz. Above all, when making such allegations, it is important to mention the sources. This Nau does not do.²

Amongst the various accounts given by al-Balādhurī, he mentions without comment the following:

"Uthmān gave orders that nothing should be accepted from the Banu Taghlib as tax except the tithe ('ushr) on gold and silver. Having learned however the fact that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb took from them a double ṣadaqa he withdrew his order."³

This account is dubious since the terms of the peace treaty

1. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 282.

2. Op. cit., pp. 110-111.

3. P. 183.

with the Banu Taghlib would have been so well-known to most of the Muslims and especially to 'Uthmān who was one of 'Umar's close advisers and one of the Companions of the Prophet. Besides, 'Uthmān became caliph right after 'Umar's death and 'Umar's policy towards the Banu Taghlib would be still fresh in his mind.

In general, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the caliphs up until the end of the Umayyad period adopted a realistic and tolerant approach towards the Banu Taghlib and that they observed their part of the treaty made in 'Umar's time, even though the Banu Taghlib did not observe theirs. There are isolated examples of Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (86-96 A.H./705-715 A.D.) and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (99-101 A.H./717-720 A.D.) who adopted a militantly hostile attitude to the Banu Taghlib.¹

It is interesting to note that the problem of the Banu Taghlib extended into the 'Abbāsīd period. Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193 A.H./781-809 A.D.) tried to abolish the peace treaty because the Banu Taghlib went on baptising their children, but he eventually decided against it after taking advice from his lawyers.²

1. This is discussed later in chapter 4.

2. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 174.

II. The taxation imposed on the Banu Taghlib

The whole question of the taxation imposed on the Christians of the Jazīra in the early Islamic period will be discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis. It is, however, appropriate here to pinpoint certain special fiscal conditions which were applied exclusively to Christian Arab tribes, amongst whom were the Banu Taghlib.

According to the peace treaty with the Banu Taghlib, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb sent tax collectors to them to collect the double ṣadaqa from their grazing cattle, camels and sheep as well as crops and the fruit of their land.¹ These tax collectors were received with hostility by the Banu Taghlib who caused them many problems. Among such tax collectors was al-Walīd b. 'Uqba who tried to punish them for their uncooperative attitude but he was subsequently sacked by 'Umar in order to avoid any trouble.² The pride exhibited by the Banu Taghlib was such that they felt able to refuse to pay such tribute which they thought beneath their tribal dignity. After all, to them is addressed the famous saying "If Islam had come later,

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1. Al-Balādhurī, p. 183; Ibn Ādam, pp. 10, 47;
Ibn Rushd (d. 520 A.H.) mentions that 'Umar I took a double ṣadaqa from them in their honour. Cf. Muqaddimāt, (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 286.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 56; al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 414 (art:- ghalaba).

the Banu Taghlib would have conquered all the Arabs."¹

It is well-known that non-Muslims were obliged to pay jizya on their heads and kharāj on their lands.² This did not apparently apply to the Banu Taghlib who were again accorded preferential treatment. Although kharāj is not mentioned in the treaty, it is clear from the writings of the early fuqahā' that the Banu Taghlib were not to be charged both kharāj on the land and double ṣadaqa. Ibn Ādam mentions the following:

"Two Christians from the Banu Taghlib bought kharāj land. Only the kharāj was charged and nothing else according to 'Umar's orders."

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz apparently followed the same system.³

In addition to this, the Banu Taghlib were also obliged to pay a trade tax ('ushr) when moving goods from one place to another to sell them. It is important to stress here that such a payment should only be made once annually, regardless of any attempts to extract payment more than once on the same goods.⁴ According to certain fuqahā' the full 'ushr had to be paid by

1. Al-Tabrīzī, op. cit., p. 108.

2. 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 263-320.

3. P. 10; cf. al-Shaybānī, op. cit., pp. 148, 150, 283, 286.

4. Ibn Ādam, p. 49; Abū Yūsuf, p. 79.

traders coming from enemy territory, from Byzantium and elsewhere, but only half the 'ushr should be imposed on the Banu Taghlib.¹ There is an interesting anecdote on this question. Ziyād b. Ḥudayr was the first collector to be sent to tax the Banu Taghlib. He used to make them pay duty ('ushr) whenever they passed by him in his post. For this reason, one of their shaykhs went to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and complained saying, "Ziyād b. Ḥudayr taxes us every time we come and go" to which 'Umar responded "You will be relieved of that." 'Umar wrote to Ziyād ordering him not to tax them more than once a year.² Such a statement as this certainly implies that justice was not always denied to the Banu Taghlib. Furthermore, it was apparently enough for a man from the Banu Taghlib to declare to the collector, "I have a debt that nullifies my property"³ for him to be exempt from paying duty.

On another occasion Abū Yūsuf relates that a man from the Banu Taghlib had a mare which the tax collector valued at twenty thousand dirhams. When he met the tax collector he paid one thousand dirhams as tax. On his return, the same tax collector claimed another thousand.

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1. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 78-79; Ibn Ādam, p. 47; 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 330-332.
 2. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 78-79; Ibn Ādam, p. 49; Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 281; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 4, p. 193.
 3. Ibn Ādam, p. 50; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 719.

If he did not do so, he demanded that the man should surrender the horse and get back his thousand dirhams. The man complained to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who ordered that customs duties on one piece of property should be paid only once a year. The man was so impressed by this just decision that he became a Muslim.¹

Tritton accepts this narrative unquestioningly as true.² This is clearly a little naive. The whole story may well have been fabricated to show that it was 'Umar's great sense of justice that persuaded so many Christians to convert to the Islamic faith. He is traditionally shown as being a famous dispenser of justice in many Islamic sources. As mentioned already, 'Umar wished generally to conciliate the Banu Taghlib, not to antagonise them.

It will be clear from the above analysis that the Banu Taghlib were treated very tolerantly by the victorious Muslims of the first century. This tolerance was a necessary result of ^{the} great military strength of the Banu Taghlib. It may well be that this tolerant economic treatment contributed to the Banu Taghlib's tenacity in adhering to the Christian faith for some three centuries. There were of course some members of the Banu Taghlib who did convert to Islam, probably out of desire to enjoy even more favourable economic privileges.

1. Pp. 78-79; Ibn Ādam, pp. 50-51.

2. Op. cit., p. 90.

III. The depth of their Christianity

Concerning the depth of Christian belief among the Banu Taghlib, al-Ṭabarī reports three versions of a statement attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib:¹

1. "Out of Christian belief they (Banu Taghlib) adhere to wine-drinking."
2. "From their Christian belief they have retained only wine-drinking."
3. "From their religion they have kept nothing but wine-drinking."

These statements, although they are biased, written as they are by a pious Muslim writer, may well be valid in their assessment of the Christianity of the Banu Taghlib as being superficial and naive. According to Syriac sources, the Banu Taghlib were not well-provided with clergy to instruct them thoroughly in the Christian faith. Only one bishop is mentioned for the Banu Taghlib.²

The Muslim sources suggest that the Banu Taghlib embraced Christianity in the first place for sound political reasons. They wanted above all to ingratiate

1. Tafsīr, ed. M.M. Shākir, (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 9, p. 575; cf. al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 2, p. 196.

2. Cf. chapter 4, p. 145.

themselves with their powerful neighbour, Byzantium.¹

The general line of this argument accords with Lammens' analysis of the Christianity of the Banu Taghlib.² Lammens argues that religion was not of crucial importance to the Bedouin for whom the traditions of the tribe mattered above all.

Lammens further suggests that the Christian Gospel had not had the time nor the means to become deeply rooted in Bedouin society.³ Here one would suggest that he is quite wrong in his assertion. As we have

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1. Al-Qalqashandī, Qalā'id al-Jumān, ed. I. al-Ibyārī, (Cairo, 1963), p. 132; idem, Nihāyat al-'Arab, p. 176; al-Suwaydī, Sabā'ik al-Dhahab, (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 43-44. A similar realistic approach may be seen in the way in which the Hamdānids, who were a branch of the Banu Taghlib, embraced Islam and fought vigorously in the jihād against their Byzantine neighbours. Cf. al-Sāmīr, al-Daūlat al-Ḥamdāniyah (sic), (Baghdad, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 38-61.
 2. Études sur le Siècle des Omayyades, (Beirut, 1930), pp. 236-9.
 3. Ibid., p. 236.

shown elsewhere in this thesis¹ it would appear that the Arab tribes came into contact with Christianity very early, perhaps as early as the first or second centuries. Certainly, Christianity had had plenty of time to make inroads into Bedouin society.

As for the alleged lack of means by which Christianity might be spread, Lammens suggests that religious education was rare, or even non-existent amongst the Bedouin tribes.² He asserts that there were attached to the nomadic tribes no priests who moved around with them, nor were they well-provided with clergy to teach them the Christian faith. There is, however, ample evidence that some

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1. Chapter 1, pp. 14-16. According to the history of Mar Ahū-dh'emmeh, (d. 575 A.D.), Mar Ahū-dh'emmeh "applied himself with great patience to pass through all the camps in the Jazīra, he instructed them and taught them by numerous conversations." He endured much suffering of cold, heat, difficult roads, desert and bitter water. He united people by his zeal and brought priests from many countries by sweet words and gifts. He flattered them in order to establish in every tribe a priest and deacon. He established churches and gave them the names of the chiefs of their tribes. Cf. PO, vol. 3, pp. 26-27.
 2. Op. cit., p. 236.

clergy were active amongst the Bedouin Arab tribes.¹

Turning to al-Akhṭal, Lammens labels him a Bedouin² and goes on to say that as a Bedouin, al-Akhṭal cared for his tribe, the Banu Taghlib, more than for anything else. For al-Akhṭal, Christianity was associated with the glorious traditions of the Banu Taghlib. Whilst agreeing with the main argument here, it is clearly dangerous to call the court poet of the Umayyads, al-Akhṭal, a Bedouin.

It is quite clear, as we have argued in detail elsewhere, that the Banu Taghlib fought the Muslims for definite and complex economic and political reasons, and that their Christianity was a good pretext for retaining their tribal independence. This they managed to do very successfully and they remained Christian until the third century of the hijra.³

1. Cf. chapter 1, p.14; PO, vol. 3, pp. 27, 32, 36; Zachariah of Mitylene, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

2. Op. cit., p. 239.

3. Al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', pp. 210-218, 224-5, 277-229; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 3, p. 158; Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 513; al-Bayhaqī, al-Sunan al-Kubrā, (Hyderabad, 1344 A.H.), vol. 9, pp. 216-217.

IV. The activities of the Banu Taghlib in the period
35-132 A.H./656-750 A.D.

It is interesting to note that in the internecine Muslim disputes which arose after the momentous murder of 'Uthmān, the Christian Banu Taghlib became involved and showed a strong preference for Mu'āwīya and the Umayyad cause against 'Alī. This support for Mu'āwīya began after the murder of 'Uthmān.¹ It probably sprang from the fact that Mu'āwīya had been their governor since 'Uthmān's reign and he had treated them gently and with great tolerance so that he could obtain their respect and obedience. 'Alī, on the other hand, was well-known for his zeal in applying Islamic law.

Generally speaking, in the fighting between 'Alī and Mu'āwīya, the Jazīra was divided into two clear geographical areas; the one area, Mosul, Naṣībīn, Dārā, Sinjār and Āmid, supported 'Alī and the other, Ḥarrān, al-Raqqā, al-Ruhā and Qarqīsiyā supported Mu'āwīya.²

It is well-known that the Banu Taghlib assisted Mu'āwīya at the Battle of Ṣiffīn. The Taghlibī poet, al-Akhṭal, spoke warmly on behalf of his tribe. Whether he was present personally at the Battle of Ṣiffīn or not,

1. Al-Akhṭal, pp. 172-6; Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, op. cit., pp. 362.

2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

he wrote as if he had been there:

"On the day of Ṣiffīn while eyes were lowered
Reinforcements came to them (Banu Umayya) from
their Lord
Against those who had killed 'Uthman unjustly
Although they had been forbidden to act in
this way they did it.

* * * * *

Still a green contingent destroys them
Bewailing the death of Ibn 'Ufān until the
captives have become still.

* * * * *

Thus, the eyes of the revolutionaries were
delighted by him (Mu'āwiya)
And they have discovered all those who
concealed their hostility and who
should be punished.

* * * * *

The Muslims are favoured as long as you remain
on their side
And when you pass away no good thing will come
after you."¹

Thus, the poet makes it clear that for him the
Umayyads had right on their side and the caliphate was
legitimately theirs.

1. Pp. 174-176.

The population of 'Āna, which was a very well-known centre for the Banu Taghlib, refused to make a bridge for the army of 'Alī to cross the Euphrates in order that they might go and fight against Mu'āwiya. Indeed, they hid their boats from 'Alī's army. 'Alī's army was therefore compelled to return through Hīt before meeting up with the Umayyad forces. 'Alī's army tried to punish the people of 'Āna for their lack of cooperation but they were unsuccessful because the people of 'Āna had fortified themselves by building a stronghold.¹

When Mu'āwiya died in 60 A.H./680 A.D. the Banu Taghlib was the only tribe in the Jazīra who assisted his son Yazīd (60-64 A.H./680-683 A.D.) in the Battle of al-Ḥurra in 63 A.H./682 A.D. In this battle the Banu Taghlib held banners on which the cross was prominently displayed.² Their very presence at this battle in Syria indicates that they were loyal enough to Yazīd to come to his help from the Jazīra.

Taghlibī support for the Umayyads continued after the death of Yazīd. The Banu Taghlib were among the Arab Christian tribes who were at the side of Marwān I

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1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, op. cit., p. 152; Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, ed. A.F. Ibrāhīm, (Cairo, 1965), vol. 3, p. 212.
 2. Al-Akḥṭal, p. 309; H. Lammens, "Le Califat de Yazīd" in Mélanges de la faculté orientale, vol. 5, (Beirut, 1911), p. 229.

(64-65 A.H./683-685 A.D.) at the Battle of Marj Rāḥiṭ¹
(64 A.H./684 A.D.).

After the battle had gone in favour of Marwān, the Jazīra tribes returned home and the Banu Taghlib suffered greatly from attacks inflicted on them by 'Umayr b. al-Ḥubbāb and the Banu Salīm under his leadership, since they had fought and wanted revenge.² The Banu Taghlib, however, managed to take vengeance on 'Umayr and his clan (which was a branch of Qays). They killed 'Umayr b. al-Ḥubbāb at / the battle of al-Ḥashāk in 70 A.H./689 A.D. near Tikrīt,³ and sent his head to Marwān's successor, 'Abd al-Malik (65-86 A.H./685-705 A.D.), who rewarded them.⁴ Al-Akhṭal wrote to 'Abd al-Malik at the Battle of al-Ḥashāk about the killing of 'Umayr:

"You were helped, O commander of the faithful,
by us,

When the news came to you, while you were in
the region of al-Ghūṭa."⁵

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1. Al-Akhṭal, p. 23; Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 314; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 98; al-Murzūqī, Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa, (Cairo, 1968), 2nd part, p. 65.
 2. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 314, 323-325.
 3. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 315-316, 329; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 207; Abū Tammām, op. cit., pp. 40, 162.
 4. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 325.
 5. Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 161; Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 325; Al-Akhṭal, p. 105.

In this tribal conflict the monks helped the Banu Taghlib by nursing their wounded and encouraging them to continue the war against Qays.¹ Finally the Banu Taghlib paid the price for their attitude when the new leader of Banu Salīm, al-Jaḥḥāf, made a raid on the Banu Taghlib and killed many of them in the Battle of al-Bishr (73 A.H./692 A.D.).²

The Banu Taghlib continued to support the Umayyad cause during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik while 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr persisted in his rebellious stance. According to al-Akhṭal, the Umayyads managed to defeat Ibn al-Zubayr only through their assistance:

"When we found out about Mus'ab's going astray, we opened a door of victory for the people of Syria."³

1. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 208.

2. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 328; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 198-200; al-Marzubānī, al-Muwashshah, (Cairo, 1323 A.H.), p. 137; Ibn Qutayba, al-Shi'r wa'l Shu'arā', (Beirut, 1964), vol. 1, p. 395; Abū Tammām, op. cit., pp. 61-69.

3. P. 134.

The Banu Taghlib helped the Umayyad caliph after careful deliberation and after discovering that Ibn al-Zubayr had no right to claim the caliphate for himself.¹

Al-Akhṭal supposed that the Umayyads inherited the caliphate from their ancestors and that they did not take it by force. He wrote to 'Abd al-Malik:

"Kings, governors and those concerned with power,
If people rise up in rebellion (against them)
they (the rulers) will cause more trouble
to them.

They rose in the sacred month (Muḥarram) and
they became,
The Masters of Kingship, not new or taken by
force.

* * * * *

My eye has not seen kingship like this
It came to you without thrust of lances and
without striking blows.

God made the caliphate from among them
Who are the best of their lineage; their
table is not empty nor bare.

But God showed you where the legitimate
right lay (the caliphate)

In spite of enemies and those lying people who
Turn away from the truth."²

1. Al-Akhṭal, p. 134; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 153.

2. Al-Akhṭal, p. 24; Abū Tammām, op. cit., pp. 99-106;
also cf. pp. 153, 155, 155-156; Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥadīd,
op. cit., vol. 5, p. 183.

The hostility which the Banu Taghlib felt towards Ibn al-Zubayr may well have been due to anxiety about control of the trade routes. This they did not wish to hand over to the Banu Qays, their rivals.¹

The rivalry between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays ceased after the killing of 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr in 73 A.H./692 A.D., but 'Abd al-Malik did not want tribal peace preferring to keep the tribes at war with one another in order to prevent them from uniting against him. Accordingly, he appears to have deliberately stirred up inter-tribal rivalries. His attempts to do this may be seen on many occasions. For example, in 73 A.H./692 A.D. al-Akhṭal boasted at 'Abd al-Malik's court of the power of his tribe, the Banu Taghlib. He thereby made al-Jaḥḥāf b. Hukaym so angry that the latter left the court to take vengeance on the Banu Taghlib. Al-Jaḥḥāf set out for the Jazīra

1. Al-Akhṭal wrote on behalf of the Banu Taghlib:

"But we own the land and the sea of Iraq,
And wherever the ships are seen in the water."

Al-Akhṭal, p. 307; al-Jumāhī, op. cit., p. 419.

He also said:

"We have settled in the Jazīra after Qays,
And it came about that it (the Jazīra) is
empty of Qays."

Al-Akhṭal, p. 209; also cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Ḥayawān,
(Cairo, 1967), vol. 6, p. 331. Abū Tammām, op. cit.,
p. 29.

with a considerable band of men and wrought fearful havoc on the Banu Taghlib in the Battle of al-Bishr. In this battle a son of al-Akhṭal who was called Abū Ghayyāth was killed. Al-Akhṭal himself was taken prisoner, but the Banu Qays eventually freed him.

Al-Akhṭal came to 'Abd al-Malik and asked him to punish al-Jaḥḥāf who fled to the territory of the Byzantines and remained there until the Banu Qays managed to persuade 'Abd al-Malik to forgive him.¹ It may well be that 'Abd al-Malik knowing well the great hostility which existed between the Banu Taghlib and Qays purposely engineered a meeting between al-Jaḥḥāf and al-Akhṭal to stir up trouble again. In order to avoid bloodshed, 'Abd al-Malik could have prevented al-Jaḥḥāf from entering his court when al-Akhṭal was there. Alternatively, he could have stopped al-Jaḥḥāf from leaving to take vengeance on the Banu Taghlib. But he did neither, although he was powerful enough to have stopped such a tribal conflict developing if he had wanted. According to Abu 'l-Faraj, in the meeting between al-Jaḥḥāf and al-Akhṭal, "'Abd al-Malik spoke about their hostility but he did not act as arbitrator"² and when al-Akhṭal lampooned Qays and said that Qays were very cowardly in war, 'Abd al-Malik said to him,

1. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 329-330; Abu Tammām, op. cit., p. 229; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 201-204.

2. Vol. 12, p. 200; cf. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 328.

"If that is true why did you say that al-Jaḥḥāf struck terror into Taghlib in the Battle of al-Bishr?"¹ This strongly suggests that 'Abd al-Malik was deliberately trying to stir up trouble between Taghlib and Qays.

Abu 'l-Faraj goes on to say that when al-Jaḥḥāf became angry at the boasting of al-Akhṭal and left the court, 'Abd al-Malik said to al-Akhṭal, "I think that you have caused serious trouble for your tribe."² Here 'Abd al-Malik is clearly aware of the course of action which al-Jaḥḥāf was going to follow.

Al-Balādhurī also has another account when he says:

"Al-Jaḥḥāf contrived to have a patent made out for himself by which he was appointed a tax collector in the district of the Jazīra, Taghlib and Bakr...."³

In this way he managed to obtain a considerable band of Qays and surprised the Banu Taghlib in 73 A.H./692 A.D. at al-Bishr and made fearful havoc among them. It is relevant to ask how al-Jaḥḥāf managed to obtain that

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1. Al-Marzubānī, op. cit., p. 138; al-'Askarī, al-Sinā'atīn, ed. M.A. al-Bajāwī, (Cairo, n.d.), p. 94.
 2. Vol. 12, p. 201; al-Marzubānī, op. cit., p. 137.
 3. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 329.

patent if 'Abd al-Malik did not wish him to do so.

Many battles between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays took place in the Jazīra in the Umayyad period. Qays was the winner in most of these severe battles¹ but both sides suffered greatly and lost their

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1. The battles in which the Banu Taghlib suffered a severe defeat were as follows:

Yawm Māksīn, Yawm al-Tharthār al-Thānī, Yawm al-Fudayn, Yawm al-Sukayr, Yawm al-Mu'ārik, Yawm Lubbā, Yawm al-Shar'abiyya, Yawm Balad, Yawm al-Bālaykh and Yawm al-Kuḥayl. The last battle in which the Banu Taghlib suffered a defeat was al-Bishr(also called al-Raḥūb or Mukhāshin) in 73 A.H./692 A.D.

The battles in which the Banu Taghlib were victorious were as follows:

Yawm al-Tharthār al-Awwal, Yawm al-Ḥashāk in 70 A.H./689 A.D. Cf. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 308-332; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 199-207; Abū Tammām, op. cit., pp. 34, 80, 113, 226-233.

chiefs¹ while 'Abd al-Malik kept quiet.

1. The chiefs of the Banu Taghlib who planned and led the tribal war in the Jazīra were as follows:

<u>The Names of the Chiefs</u>	<u>The Names of the Battles</u>	<u>The Sources</u>
1. 'Ubayda b. Humām	al-Bishr	Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 202; <u>Ansāb</u> , vol. 5, p. 329.
2. al-Shamardhā		
3. Shu'ayb b. Malīl (killed in this battle)	al-Tharthār al-Awwal	Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 207; <u>Ansāb</u> , vol. 5, p. 315.
4. Tha'laba b. Niyāt		
5. Hanḍala b. Hawbar		
6. 'Umayr b. Jundil	al-Sukayr	<u>Ansāb</u> , vol. 5, p. 321.
7. Ziyād b. Hawbar	al-Tharthār	<u>Ibid.</u> , pp. 318-323.
	al-Thānī	
	al-Shar'abīyya	
	al-Bālaykh and	
8. Mirār b. 'Alqama	al-Ḥashāk	<u>Ibid.</u> , p. 323.

The well-known Taghlibī clans who played an important part in the inter-tribal war in the Jazīra were as follows:

Banu al-Fadkūs,¹ Banu Mālik b. Jushim,² Banu al-Aws,³ al-Wahdī,⁴ Banu al-Jawwāl,⁵ al-Qu'ūr,⁶ Banu Farrās,⁷ 'Itbān,⁸ Humiyya,⁹ 'Abd Bakr,¹⁰ al-Arāqim, al-Qamāqim, al-Lahāzim, al-Abnā', Rīsh al-Ḥubāra,¹¹ Banu al-Ṭabīb,¹² Banu Usāma,¹³ Banu Zuhār¹⁴ and Banu Ḥarfa.¹⁵

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1. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 326; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 198-199; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 97.
 2. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 315; al-Quṭāmī, Dīwān, ed. M. Maṭlūb and I. al-Sāmūrā'ī, (Beirut, 1969), p. 136.
 3. Ansāb, p. 320; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 175.
 4. Al-Akhṭal, p. 53, no. 3.
 5. Ibid., p. 161, no. 3.
 6. Ibid., p. 80, no. 2; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 138.
 7. Al-Akhṭal, p. 109, no. j.
 8. Ibid., p. 176, no. 1.
 9. Ibid., p. 270, no. 1.
 10. Ibid., p. 270, no. 1.
 11. Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 138; al-Quṭāmī, op. cit., pp. 116, 123, 125.
 12. Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 125.
 13. Ibid., p. 44.
 14. Ibid., p. 44.
 15. Al-Ṣāwī, Sharḥ Dīwān Jarīr, (Beirut, n.d.), p. 77.

In the severe inter-tribal battles in the Jazīra the Banu Taghlib held their banners on which the cross was prominently displayed.¹

The war between Taghlib and Qays sprang not only from political reasons but also from economic ones. An illustration of this is when 'Umayr b. al-Ḥubbāb crossed the Euphrates and settled with his Sulaymītes (a branch of the Qays) on the Khābūr. It was through this move that the Christian Taghlib, whose settlement there extended as far as the Tigris and beyond it, came into contact with Qays. The Banu Taghlib then approached Zufar (one of the leaders of the Banu Sulaym) with the request that he should order the Banu Sulaym to vacate the Khābūr as they had taken the liberty of encroaching on this territory and had caused friction. Zufar, however, paid no attention to this, so a feud arose between the Banu Taghlib and Salīm.² This conflict over land is also mentioned by al-Akhṭal in his poetry. He writes that the Banu Taghlib managed to conquer the fertile land of the Jazīra after pushing Qays out of the Jazīra.³

The Banu Taghlib emerged triumphant from this

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1. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 319; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 125.
 2. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 314-315; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 151; al-Ṣāwī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 451.
 3. Pp. 209, 222; cf. al-Bakrī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 595.

particular conflict and they took from the Banu Salīm fertile land where there was wheat and vineyards.¹

The mutual rivalry between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays based on political and economic factors was fanned by an emphasis on tribal differences. According to al-Balādhurī, at least, Qays was responsible for the deteriorating relationship between themselves and Taghlib, who originally had fought on the same side against Yemenite tribes. 'Umayr b. al-Ḥubbāb and his leaders were always deriding the Christian chiefs of the Banu Taghlib. This lack of respect ruined the good relations between them and stirred up animosity.²

In the severe fighting between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays in the Umayyad period, Taghlib asked its branches in Adharbayjān to help it.³ They also asked al-Namr b. Qāsiṭ and Banu Shaybān in the Jazīra to help them.⁴ These tribes, although they were Muslims, did offer help to the Banu Taghlib. The Banu Taghlib appealed to them as fellow Arabs and they responded in this way.⁵ Incidents such as these show that 'aṣabiyya among these tribes was stronger than their adherence to Islam.

1. Al-Akḥṭal, p. 222; Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 319.

2. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 313-314.

3. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 205-206.

4. Ansāb, vol. 5, pp. 318, 320.

5. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 318.

In conclusion this study of the tribal conflict between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays in the Umayyad period reveals that they were rivals with one another over the fertile land of the Jazīra as well as the control of the trade routes. When certain Umayyad caliphs asked the Banu Taghlib to help them against Ibn al-Zubayr, Qays in reaction assisted Ibn al-Zubayr. In most of the inter-tribal war in the Jazīra, Qays emerged triumphant.

‘Abd al-Malik was careful to keep the tribes at loggerheads and in a state of disunity for his own political reasons. Indeed, the Umayyad caliphs believed generally in the proverb that says "divide and rule". They clearly thought that any tribal peace meant that all the tribes would ally with each other against them, the central power.

Neither Islam nor Christianity could prevent the tribes from executing barbaric tribal vengeance which was apparently even more cruel than it had been in pre-Islamic times.¹ After the killing of ‘Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr and the fearful massacre among the Banu Taghlib in the Yawm of al-Bishr, ‘Abd al-Malik realized that decisive action should be taken to stop the feud between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays. He ordered al-Jahhāf, the chief of the Banu Qays in the Yawm of al-Bishr, to

1. Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 322, 326; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 201, 207.

pay blood money to the Banu Taghlib for the bloodshed caused in that battle. On the other hand, 'Abd al-Malik made his son al-Walīd pay blood money to both sides for all the bloodshed that had occurred between them before the Yawm of al-Bishr.¹ In this way, both sides felt that they had been treated equally. In addition to that, 'Abd al-Malik also threatened 'Abd Yasū' b. Ḥarb, the chief of the Banu Taghlib as an attempt to put an end to the feud between the Banu Qays and the Banu Taghlib.² By this policy, 'Abd al-Malik managed to put an end to the feud between the Banu Taghlib and the Banu Qays in the Jazīra. This may be the reason why the sources are silent about the activities of the Banu Taghlib between the reign of 'Abd al-Malik and the reign of al-Hādī, the 'Abbāsīd caliph (169-170 A.H./785-786 A.D.).³

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1. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 203; Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 330; Abū Tammām, op. cit., p. 229.
 2. A.A. Dixon, The Umayyad Caliphate, (London, 1971), p. 114.
 3. In the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193 A.H./786-809 A.D.) the Banu Taghlib encountered his tax collector Rūḥ b. Ṣālih whose death his brother Ḥātim ruthlessly avenged on the Banu Taghlib in 171 A.H./787 A.D. Five years later, they fought against Yazīd b. Mazyad who had been summoned to assist by the caliph. In the reign of al-Ma'mūn /

This study of the Banu Taghlib during the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Umayyads reveals that the status of Arab Christians, especially the Banu Taghlib, was different from the Christians of the conquered territories. The Christians of the Banu Taghlib attained the highest status of all among the People of the Book. They even refused to be called dhimmīs and pay the jizya. This enraged the Muslims.

The Banu Taghlib, although non-Muslims, expressed partisanship and participated actively in the political upheavals around the caliphate. Though their Christianity was probably only superficial and naive, they kept their faith until the third century A.H. This clinging to Christianity may have been a result of a desire to keep on good terms with their powerful neighbours, Byzantium. More likely, however, the Banu Taghlib thought that Christianity was the best way in which they could preserve the independence, the unity and special characteristics of their tribe.

/al-Ma'mūn (198-218 A.H./813-833 A.D.) the Banu Taghlib subdued their neighbouring Qays.

"The disorders in the Jazīra in the second half of the 3rd century A.H. finally led to the migration of the Taghlib; only a section of them remained in the country round al-Raḥba and Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar; another perhaps went over to Byzantine territory."

Cf. Supplement to EI¹, p. 225 (art:- Taghlib).

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AND THE EARLY CALIPHATE

The Christians of the Jazīra, like other Christians, had their special religious practices and organisation for worship. This organisation was of course derived from the general organisation of the Christian Church and the customs of the fathers of the Church that had become general laws.

The institution of the Christian Church had varying ranks of clergy under its control. These clergy wore special clothes which differed from one rank to another. The Christian Church enjoyed internal autonomy in matters concerned with religion and other related areas,¹ as will be discussed later.

The rank of Patriarch was the highest among the clergy of the Christian Church. The original meaning of this word is "father of fathers"² and it came to denote a leader of the Christians.³ There were six Patriarchs in the Christian world; the Patriarch of Rome, the Patriarch of Alexandria, the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Patriarch of Antioch and the Patriarch of al-Madā'in⁴ (Ctesiphon) who was also called Catholicos.

1. 'Alī, op. cit., p. 89.

2. Cheikho, op. cit., p. 190.

3. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 111 (art:- Biṭrik), Cheikho, op. cit., p. 190.

4. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, pp. 32-33; vol. 2, pp. 113-115.

The Patriarch (Catholicos) of al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon) was the leader of the Nestorians in the east.¹ Under the Patriarch (Catholicos) of al-Madā'in were the Metropolitans under whom there was a bishop for every province. Below the bishop were priests and deacons. The Metropolitan was the head of the bishops of a given area and lived in a big city.² The bishops were in charge of the priests in the diocese;³ under their control were the assistants of the priest,⁴ the deacons. The Patriarch of Antioch was the leader of the Monophysites (Jacobites) in the east. He, like the Patriarch of al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon), had Metropolitans under him, under whom were bishops. Below the bishops were priests and deacons.

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1. Ibid., vol. I, p. 33; cf. Barṣūm, al-Lu'lu', p. 502.
Idem, Risāla Fi 'l-Alfāḍ al-Siryāniyya Fi 'l-Ma'ājim al-'Arabiyya, (ed. in The Journal of the Syrian Academy, Damascus, 1948-1951) pp. 168, f.n. 2, and 179.
 2. Barṣūm, al-Lu'lu', p. 502.
 3. Ibid., p. 497; idem, Risāla, p. 142.
 4. Barṣūm, al-Lu'lu', p. 499.

I. The Jacobite seat of Tikrīt

In spite of the ill-treatment that the Mesopotamian Christians suffered before Islam at the hand of the Sassanians,¹ both Nestorians and Jacobites managed to achieve independent seats in Mesopotamia during this period. As already mentioned, the Nestorian seat during the years 485-750 A.D. was at al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon). The Jacobites managed to obtain an independent seat in Tikrīt. The incumbent of this post was variously called "bishop", "Metropolitan" and "Catholicos".²

1. Cf. chapter I.

2. The terms seem to have been used rather imprecisely. Bar-Senaya uses the term Metropolitan, p. 128. Bar-Hebraeus also prefers this usage, vol. 3, pp. 122. Michael the Syrian calls Ahudema the "bishop of the Persian country", vol. 2, p. 313, and the "chief of the Orthodox". He also states that Athanasius al-Jamāl, the Patriarch of Antioch (595-631 A.D.) called Mar Uthā (624-649) the "Metropolitan". According to Michael the Syrian, Mar Uthā himself signed the synod of Mar Mattī as Metropolitan. Also the Patriarch John Abu'l-Sadrāt (631-648 A.D.) called Mar Uthā "the bishop of Persia and its Metropolitan", and he sometimes referred to him as the "Metropolitan of Dayr Mar Mattī and the East side", vol. 2, pp. 413, /

The hostilities in the 6th century A.D. between the rival Arab dynasties of the Ghassanids in Syria, who were Jacobites and the Lakhmids in al-Hīra, who were probably Nestorians,¹ had an influence on the spread of the Jacobite faith. Al-Hārith b. Jabala (the King of Ghassān from 529 to 569 A.D.) asked the Byzantine Empress, Theodora, (ruled 527-548 A.D.) who supported the Jacobites, to appoint a bishop with Jacobite views to organise the Arab tribes within Byzantine territory. Jacob al-Baradaeus (d. 587 A.D.) was chosen to be bishop

/423, 442, 496, 502. Michael the Syrian in writing about the Jacobites' leader Danhā II says "in 728 A.D. Danhā the Catholicos died", vol. 2, p. 462. The unknown author of al-Tārīkh al-Sa'rdī calls Mar Uthā "Metropolitan", vol. 2, (PO, vol. 13) p. 543. Bar Hebraeus calls the Jacobite leaders from 630 A.D. until his own time "Maphrians" but sometimes he adds "Catholicos", vol. 3, pp. 118-158; Mafārinat al-Siryān, pp. 182, 369; cf. the discussion of the history of the office of Maphrian of Tikrīt by Fiey, "Tagrīt", pp. 306-307.

1. 'Alī, op. cit., p. 62.

for the provinces of the Jazīra and Syria.¹ Thus political factors helped Jacob to spread his sect in the Jazīra and Syria. He appointed many bishops and priests whom he ordained and can be considered the real founder of the Jacobite Church in the east.

Mar Aḥudama (d. 575 A.D.) was the deputy of Jacob al-Baradaeus in Mesopotamia.² Qām-Ishū' (578-609 A.D.) who succeeded Mar Aḥudama, managed to ordain many bishops.³ Samuel (614-624 A.D.) succeeded Qām-Ishū' and managed to organise the Jacobites as a distinct sect.⁴

In 3 A.H./624 A.D. the Jacobites elected Mar-Uthā (3-29 A.H./624-649 A.D.) as the first Metropolitan in

1. John of Ephesus, Lives, vol. 18, p. 691; vol. 19, p. 228; Zachariah, op. cit., pp. 297, 314.
Frend, op. cit., pp. 284-285; Honigmann, op. cit., pp. 159-161; Trimmingham, op. cit., pp. 166-167; Atiya, op. cit., pp. 183-184.
2. Nau, ed. Histoires D'Ahoudemmeh, ed. in PO, vol. 3, pp. 15-51.
3. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 102.
4. Ibid., p. 112.

Tikrīt.¹ In this matter, they acted independently and

1. Bar-Senaya says, "In 3 A.H./624 A.D. the Jacobites had held a council in Dayr Mar-Mattī and appointed Mar-Uthā the first Metropolitan in Tikrīt," p. 128. The author of al-Tārīkh al-Sa'rdī says, "In the 3rd year of Muḥammad the Prophet, the Jacobites held a council in Dayr Mar-Mattī in Nineveh and they appointed the Chairs; the first was in Tikrīt, and they ordained Mar-Uthā as a Metropolitan.", vol. 2, (PO, vol. 13) p. 543. Marī says, "Sherawīh the Persian king had escaped to al-Nahrawān and the Romans followed him with the Jacobites, then the Jacobites elected a Metropolitan in Tikrīt.", p. 61.

Bar-Hebraeus, on the other hand, suggests that there was a Metropolitan in Tikrīt at an earlier date, in 559 A.D. There does not seem to be any justification for giving greater credence to the dissenting opinion of Bar-Hebraeus who is a much later source in any case. He writes that Jacob al-Baradaeus raised the bishop of Bīth 'Arabāyā Mar-Aḥudama, for the first time as "Metropolitan of the East", in 559 A.D., see Maphārinat al-Siryān, p. 182. The life of Mar-Uthā, the first Metropolitan of Tikrīt, was written by his successor Danhā (29-39 A.H./649-659 A.D.); cf. Wright, Catalogue, vol. 3, p. 133; idem, Syriac Literature, p. 137.

before receiving the approval of the Patriarch of Antioch.¹ The Jacobites were motivated in this action by a desire to establish an official status for their sect, as their rivals, the Nestorians, had done as early as 485 A.D. The Nestorians were favoured at the Persian court and used this privilege to provoke much antagonism towards the Jacobites inside the Sassanian empire.² The Jacobites were not the first group to act independently of Antioch. The Armenians had already appointed bishops without approval from the Patriarch of Antioch.³ The moment chosen by the Jacobites was an especially appropriate one. The recent peace-treaty signed between the two great powers, Byzantium and Persia, after the victories of Heraclius in the war that took place in 5 A.H./626 A.D. was a probable encouragement to the Jacobites in their desire to give their sect a proper, separate organisation.⁴

1. It would appear that they asked the Patriarch to ordain the Metropolitan but he refused "because of the decision made by the council of Nicaea which says when the leader of the Eastern bishops dies the bishops have to ordain another leader."

Michael, vol. 2, p. 416; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, pp. 120-2.

2. Unknown historian, op. cit., pp. 70, 87; Wigram, op. cit., pp. 153-154; Rehatsek, op. cit., pp. 52, 67-68.

3. Michael, vol. 2, p. 413.

4. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 119; Wright, op. cit., p. 136.

The elected Jacobite leader held a council in Daḡr Mar-Mattī before he settled in Tikrīt; in that council he organised the dioceses.¹ The Patriarch of Antioch accepted this organization and said "The Metropolitan of Tikrīt is my deputy, I will excommunicate anyone who is against this."²

Mar-Uthā left for Tikrīt and tried to build a church in Mosul but Ishū'yāb the Nestorian bishop at Mosul (6-16 A.H./627-637 A.D.) prevented him from doing this. He managed to ordain another three bishops outside the Jazīra after the Jacobites had rapidly increased in number and influence.³

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1. Marī, p. 61; al-Sa'rdī, vol. 2, (PO.Vol.13)p.543. These dioceses were: Tikrīt, Bīth 'Arabāyā, Sinjār, Ma'lathāyā, Arzān, Jumal, Bīth Roman (also known as al-Bawāzīj), Karmī, Jazīrat b. 'Umar, Bīth Nuhidrā, Phīruz Shahpur, Shahrazūr and the diocese of Banu Taghlib.
 2. Al-Sa'rdī, vol. 2, (PO, vol. 13) p. 544.
 3. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 124. According to the letter no. 42 of Ishū'yab III, the church was built by the Jacobites in Mosul by bribing the rulers (possibly the Muslims). Cf. Mar Isho-yahbh, The Book of Consolations, trans. P. Scott-Moncrieff, (London, 1904), part I, p. XLIX.

The authority of the Jacobite leader

The authority possessed by the Jacobite leader was quite extensive. He instituted new sees, appointed and deposed bishops, consecrated the chrism,¹ and exercised generally pontifical functions, with the exception of the power of transferring bishops from one see to another.²

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1. The chrism is the holy oil. Cf. Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 503.
 2. Bar-Hebraeus, Commentary on the Gospels, trans. and ed. W.E.W. Carr (London, 1925), p. lxiv. The leader of the Nestorians at al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon) had even more authority than the Jacobite leader at Tikrīt, since the former was the principal ruler of the Nestorians in the east. He could pass judgement on important issues and examine grievances from Nestorians of all different classes. In appeal cases he could organise a re-examination of the case or he could refuse such appeals. Moreover, he could order that a new investigation should be made into the case of somebody who claimed that he was being unjustly treated. (Cf. J. Dauvillier, Dictionnaire de droit canonique, droit chaldéen, (Paris, 1942) vol. 3, p. 335. But he had not the authority to imprison or beat any of the Nestorians under his care. Meanwhile he could impose fines/

The appointment of the Jacobite leader

It is important to consider the question of whether the Jacobite leaders were elected by their own Church or nominated by the caliphate. According to the history of Gabriel, Gabriel, the bishop of Ṭūr 'Abdīn, (d. 48 A.H./668 A.D.) obtained from 'Umar I (d. 23 A.H./634 A.D.) a charter for the protection of the Christians under his jurisdiction.¹ This information suggests that a Jacobite leader obtained permission from the caliphate to govern his fellow-Christians in the early Islamic period. Speaking of a later period, Ibn al-Muqaffa' states:

"When the Patriarch of Antioch died, the caliph al-Walīd (86-96 A.H./705-715 A.D.) said: I will not permit a Patriarch to be appointed in my lifetime."²

/fines on the guilty or prohibit people from speaking to them. (Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Ḥayawān, vol. 4, p. 27). The Nestorian leader also "can ... inflict ecclesiastical punishments, such as removal of bishops and priests from their ranks..." Cf. A. Mez, The Renaissance of Islam, trans. S.K. Bakhsh and D.S. Margoliouth (Delhi, 1979), p. 34.

1. Mingana, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 462-463. Bar-Hebraeus however writes that Gabriel died in 34 A.H./654 A.D.) op. cit., vol. I, p. 122; C. Moss, Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books and Related Literature in British Museum (London, 1962), pp. 381, 558, 1099.
2. Op. cit., p. 65.

From this information it may be deduced that the authority for the appointment of the Patriarch lay in the hands of the caliphate at certain moments anyway during the first century A.H./the seventh century A.D.

Although the official permission to appoint a Patriarch came from the caliph himself, Christians could make their own choice of a suitable person. Theophanes, for example, cites the instance of Christians asking Marwān II (127-132 A.H./744-750 A.D.) to give them permission to elect a Patriarch after the death of Athanasius in 127 A.H./744 A.D. Marwān II granted them permission to do so, and Iwannis was thus elected Patriarch of the eastern Christians (127-137 A.H./744-754 A.D.). Marwan II instructed all his governors to honour this Jacobite Patriarch.¹

On occasions such as this, caliphal patronage could result in further advantages to be enjoyed by an individual Christian leader. According to evidence from Michael² the Syrian and Bar-Hebraeus,³ the authority of the Jacobite Patriarch Iwannis was extended over all the eastern Christians, including the Nestorians and Malkites. This probably resulted from the fact that Iwannis bribed Marwān II with a very generous present⁴ in order to

1. Op. cit., p. 649 (A.M. 6236).

2. Vol. 2, p. 464.

3. Vol. 1, p. 310.

4. See p. 162 below.

obtain his permission to widen the powers of the Jacobite leader as opposed to those of rival Christian leaders.

For the period under discussion in this thesis, there would appear, however, to be no evidence from the early sources, either Islamic or Christian, that a caliph actually appointed a Christian leader personally. There does exist, however, an interesting, if isolated, example of such a practice which dates from a much later period, namely the early 6th century A.H./12th century A.D. which is certainly worthy of analysis here. The account comes from the work of Ibn Hamdūn who mentions a caliph appointing a Nestorian Patriarch to be in authority over both the Jacobite and the Malkite Christians at the beginning of the 6th century A.H./12th century A.D. In particular, Ibn Hamdūn states that the caliph al-Muqtafī refers to the "old well-established practice" of the Christians submitting their nomination of Patriarch to the caliph, who then approved such an appointment. The full text of the relevant section from Ibn Hamdūn's work is quoted below.¹

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1. The 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Muqtafī (530-555 A.H./1135-1160 A.D.) wrote to 'Abd Ishū' III who became Nestorian Catholicos in 553 A.H./1139 A.D. as follows:

"A lawful assembly of Christians elected you to look after their affairs, to administer their trust properties; to adjust differences/

The evidence provided by the above-mentioned sources, although scanty, would tend to suggest that it did happen that in the early Islamic period the caliphs at various times played an active part in the appointment of new Christian Patriarchs. Although elected by their churches, the Patriarchs' appointment was most probably subject to confirmation by the caliph.

/differences between the strong and the weak among them. According to an old well-established practice they submitted their nomination and, as Imām, I gave permission to you to act as Catholicos of the Nestorians in the town of al-Salām and the rest of the Muslim countries and also to be an authority over al-Rūm, the Jacobites and the Malkites."

Cf. Tadhkira of Ibn Ḥamdūn, ed. H.F. Amedroz in JRAS (1908), pp. 467-470.

II. The Maphrians of Tikrīt under the early Islamic Caliphate

It is important to note that there is a lack of information in the Christian sources about the history of the Jacobite Church and its leaders in the period under consideration in this thesis, namely the period immediately after the coming of Islam. The Nestorian sources are silent on this matter and the major work which provides detailed information in this area is a very late source, Bar-Hebraeus.¹ Since the term Maphrian is used by Bar-Hebraeus to denote the Jacobite leader at Tikrīt, it will be used in the following discussion, although as already mentioned, other titles were applied to this office in the early period.

The Jazīra was a very important centre for Jacobite Christianity. All the Maphrians of Tikrīt were chosen from the people of that area during the period 3-132 A.H./ 624-750 A.D. Moreover, the Jazīra provided all the Patriarchs of Antioch in this period too. Thus, the

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1. Michael the Syrian also supplies limited information on this topic. Indeed these two chroniclers, especially Bar-Hebraeus, provide invaluable information on the history of the two major branches of the eastern Church, the Jacobites and the Nestorians as well as interesting insights into the political events of the periods with which their annals are occupied.

Jazīra may be seen as an area where Jacobite Christianity flourished and prospered, an area which dominated both the western and eastern Monophysite Church. To produce such a succession of leaders argues for the Jazīra being a very important spiritual and intellectual centre for the Jacobites.

According to the detailed account of Bar-Hebraeus, the Maphrians of Tikrīt were as follows:-

1. Danha I (29-39 A.H./649-659 A.D.)

After the death of Mar-Uthā in 29 A.H./649 A.D. the Patriarch of Antioch sent letters to the bishops and lords of the East. These letters were signed by him and the western bishops. According to Bar-Hebraeus, the text of the letters was as follows:-

"When the Patriarch died, the Maphrian should ordain his successor, so none should become Maphrian without the Patriarch's approval and none would become Patriarch without the Maphrian's approval."¹

The Patriarch acted in this way probably because he wanted to strengthen the unity of the eastern and western Christians. The Patriarch of Antioch had, however, had the authority to appoint the Maphrians since the clerical council that had taken place in the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius (379-395 A.D.) This council had declared "The Patriarch of Antioch is the

1. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 130.

chief of the orientals."¹

The bishops of the east accepted this ruling by the Patriarch of Antioch and elected Danha, a disciple of Mar-Uthā and brought him to the Patriarch of Antioch, Theodosius (29-47 A.H./649-667 A.D.) The Patriarch then ordained Danha as Maphrian of Tikrīt and all the east.² Danha ruled until 39 A.H./659 A.D.

2. Bar-Jesus (49-65 A.H./669-684 A.D.)

After the people of Tikrīt had been without a Maphrian for ten years, Bar-Jesus was ordained by the Patriarch Mar-Severus II³ (48-61 A.H./668-680 A.D.). No further information is available about this man.

Although the few available sources do not mention why the post of Maphrian remained vacant for such a long period it may well be that this hiatus occurred because of disputes over possible successors to Danha. Even the more established Nestorian Christians were often prone to internal dissensions. One such split had occurred amongst the Metropolitans about the post of Catholicos, after the death of Ishū'yab III in 41 A.H./661 A.D. The dispute arose between three of the Metropolitans, each of them called George. The

1. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 71. For details of this Christian writer on legal matters cf. p. XXXIV

2. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 130.

3. Ibid.

first was a disciple of Ishū'-yab III, the second was the Metropolitan of Naṣībīn and the third was the Metropolitan of Kūfa. Each of them claimed that he had the sole right to succeed to the post of Catholicos.¹ George, the disciple of Ishū'-yāb III managed to gain the post of Catholicos, but the two other Metropolitans rebelled against him. After many efforts he managed to persuade them to pay him their homage.²

Bar-Hebraeus states that during this split amongst the Nestorians, the Metropolitan of Kūfa accused the Catholicos in the court of the governor of Kūfa of secretly collecting money from Christians. As a result, the governor told the Catholicos to give him the money, but the Catholicos denied the charge altogether. Not accepting the denial, the governor ordered that all the churches and monasteries in Kūfa and Hīra should be destroyed.³

1. Al-Marjī, p. 78.

2. Ibid., pp. 79-81.

3. Vol. 3, p. 132. There was a Nestorian uprising in Qaṭar against the episcopal of Rew-Ardashīr which was in Persia. This action made the Catholicos go to the Arabian Gulf and hold a council in al-Baḥraīn in 57 A.H./676 A.D. This council provided many laws for the organisation of the relationship between the bishops and the Catholicos.

Cf. J.B. Chabot, Synodicon Orientale (Paris, 1902) pp. 482-490. This work concludes with an extract/

In this period, the Jacobites must have been in a similarly divided and uneasy state or in an even worse condition. They themselves were inexperienced in the post of Metropolitan at Tikrīt, which was a new one for them. The Nestorians, on the other hand, had had such posts since 485 A.D.

3. Ibrāhīm II (65-67 A.H./684-686 A.D.)

He was ordained by the Patriarch Athanasius II (64-67 A.H./683-686 A.D.). After leading a short and seemingly uneventful life he died and was buried in the church at Tikrīt.¹

4. David I (67 A.H./686 A.D.)

After Ibrāhīm and the Patriarch Athanasius had both died in 67 A.H./686 A.D., the eastern bishops did not wait until a new Patriarch was appointed. They met and on their own initiative consecrated a man called David as

/extract written by Hananishū'II, the Nestorian Patriarch (157-163 A.H./773-779 A.D.). It is very probable that this collection of legal decisions was compiled during his reign; Ibn al-Ṭayyib, op. cit., pp. 140-145.

1. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 136. Cf. Barṣūm, al-Lu'lu', p. 291.

Maphrian for Tikrīt and the east. Six months after his consecration he and many eastern bishops went to Diyār Bakr to elect the Patriarch. After arriving there he met his death.¹

After the death of David I, the Metropolitan of the monastery of Mar-Mattī at that time who was John, a holy man, was urged by the monks of Mar-Mattī to consecrate bishops for those dioceses of the east which were without bishops. However, John said:

"I have neither the power nor the legal right to do this, since such a power is vested with the Maphrian of Tikrīt, so he will consecrate the bishops for the dioceses when he is appointed."²

However, the monks were annoyed as a result of this and sent a message to the recently appointed Patriarch, Julian II, (67-91 A.H./686-709 A.D.), saying:

"Our present Metropolitan, John, is weak because of old age and has resigned his ecclesiastical authority, so we ask you to send us another Metropolitan to replace him."

1. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 144. Bar-Hebraeus erroneously states that the death of David I "caused the post of the Maphrian of Tikrīt to remain without a Maphrian for six years." Bar-Hebraeus himself later fixes the date of the successor of David I as 67 A.H./686 A.D. Cf. vol. 3, p. 146; cf. Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 291.

2. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 144.

The Patriarch, believing in the genuineness of their words, sent them a Maphrian. The name of this man is unknown, according to the sources. When the new Maphrian arrived he went up to the monastery, the monks came out to meet him and brought him inside to the accompaniment of chanting. When John heard the shouting and the sound of chants, he asked his disciple what these excited voices were that he could hear. The disciple replied that another Metropolitan had succeeded him. When John heard this he angrily left the monastery and set off for the monastery of Bīth 'Arabāyā near Tikrīt.

Because of a plague that broke out in the monastery, the new Maphrian did not dare to stay any longer in the monastery. He returned to the Patriarch as quickly as he could.¹

5. John I (67-69 A.H./686-688 A.D.)

The same monks then went off to John, falling at his feet asking him for forgiveness and to return with them to the monastery of Bīth 'Arabāyā near Tikrīt. He blessed them but he refused to return. Later on, however, he was summoned before a meeting held by six bishops at Tikrīt in the same year. In this meeting the bishops discussed the problem of the vacancy of the Maphrian of Tikrīt with John and managed to persuade him to agree to accept the

1. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 146.

post. Thus, he became Maphrian for Tikrīt and all the east. After completing a year and six months in the post and consecrating three new bishops, he died on the 14th January 688 A.D.¹

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1. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 146; Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 291. In another part of his work, Bar-Hebraeus relates that when Severus II, the Patriarch of Antioch (668-680 A.D.) was about to die he granted John I, the Maphrian of Tikrīt, permission to reappoint those whom the Patriarch had excommunicated. (Vol. 1, p. 286.) This statement is wrong as it stands because according to sources other than Bar Hebraeus the Patriarch Severus II died sometime before 686 A.D., the date when John I became Maphrian (686-688 A.D.). (Tell-Mahrē, p. 10; A Syriac Chronicle of the Year 846 A.D., p. 580; Michael, vol. 2, p. 444.) It is possible that this permission had been given to John I before he officially became Maphrian, in order that he might help the Patriarch Severus II solve a problem he was facing with the bishops of the Jazīra, since John was an influential and respected man in the area. The problem had arisen over the question of who had the right to appoint bishops. The bishops of the Jazīra claimed that it was the Metropolitan's right to appoint the bishop, whilst the Patriarch insisted that the right was his alone. The bishops held a council and they excommunicated/

6. Danha II (69-110 A.H./688-728 A.D.)

After the death of John, two bishops met at Tikrīt. These bishops were John al-Qarqasānī and Yūsuf the bishop of the Taghlib Arabs. They consecrated Danha II as Maphrian without getting the prior approval of the Patriarch of Antioch. They acted in this independent manner at Tikrīt because the Patriarch Julian (67-91 A.H./686-709 A.D.) had sent a Metropolitan to the monastery of Bīth 'Arabāyā near Tikrīt without their consent and at the suggestion of only a few rebellious monks.¹ The Patriarch Julian continually sent affectionate letters to the bishops and nobility of Tikrīt urging them to reunite with the see of Antioch but they opposed these proposals

/excommunicated the Patriarch of Antioch, Severus II.

On the other hand, the Patriarch himself then excommunicated them. This impossible situation lasted four years. Cf. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, pp. 284-286. In writing the biography of John I as Maphrian of Tikrīt, Bar-Hebraeus may have used the term "Maphrian" of John I before he actually assumed this office. This explanation seems plausible because, according to Bar-Hebraeus, John I was called "John the Old" which implies that he may well have been Metropolitan in Mar-Mattī for a long time during the reign of Severus II (668-680 A.D.).

1. Cf. pp. 156-7 about this problem.

for some time. Then Danha II and some bishops paid a visit to the Patriarch who responded by attempting to prevent Danha II from returning to the east. Nevertheless, Danha II managed to escape and headed for the monastery of Qinnasrīn and settled there. So the Patriarch Julian appointed Bacchos, bishop of Kūfa as Maphrian of Tikrīt.¹

When the Patriarch Julian died, he was succeeded by a new Patriarch, Elias (91-105 A.H./709-723 A.D.), who went to Tikrīt and after reconciling the faithful with Danha II, he reordained him as Maphrian of Tikrīt.²

7. Paul II (110-140 A.H./728-757 A.D.)

On the death of Danha II, Paul the priest and archimandrite of the monastery of Kanush in the jurisdiction of Sinjār was elected and consecrated by Mar-Athanasius the Patriarch of Antioch (106-120 A.H./724-737 A.D.) Paul reconciled the factions in Tikrīt.³

Ṣalībā Zakhā, the Catholicos of the Nestorians, wrote to Paul asking him for permission to build a church in Tikrīt for the Nestorians.⁴ Paul replied saying:

"As far as I am concerned, I can see no harm,
but I am afraid of the reaction of the

1. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 148; idem, vol. 1, p. 296;
cf. Michael, vol. 2, p. 449.

2. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 150.

3. Ibid., p. 152.

4. Ibid., p. 156.

Patriarch and the people of Tikrīt; so I urge you to go to Naṣibīn and advise the Nestorians there to return to the Jacobites the churches which have been taken from them, then no doubt the people of Tikrīt will allow you to build a church in their city."

So Zakhā went to Naṣibīn and pleaded with Cyprios, the aged Nestorian Metropolitan, and also with the Nestorians of the city. Finally the Jacobites were able to reacquire the famous church of Mar-Domitius in Naṣibīn. Then the Nestorians managed to build a small church for themselves on the Tigris outside the walls of Tikrīt.¹

It is impossible to form any exact estimate of the number of the Christians in the Jazīra in the days of the above-mentioned Maphrians, but there is ample evidence as to their wide geographical distribution and that the population was predominantly Christian. All extant Syriac historical sources testify to the numerical predominance of the Christian population throughout the Jazīra in the period under discussion in this thesis.

1. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 158.

III. The problems of the Christian Church in the late Umayyad period

Generally speaking, the sources make little reference to internal strife within the Christian Church in the early Islamic period. They do, however, give substantial details of particular controversies which erupted towards the end of the Umayyad period (127-132 A.H./744-750 A.D.). This situation was caused by a number of factors. The Patriarch of Antioch, Iwannis (127-137 A.H./744-754 A.D.), had allegedly reached his exalted position by cheating the Metropolitans and the bishops in the Jazīra.¹ In order to strengthen his position against his rivals, he flattered Marwān II (127-132 A.H./744-750 A.D.), the last Umayyad caliph, to whom he gave an extremely valuable present that was loaded on fifty camels and declared his submission and homage to the caliph. Marwān II granted the Patriarch authority over all the Christians.²

Moreover, the Patriarch Iwannis divided Āmid into two big divisions and gave five dioceses in the area to Ashi'yā the disciple of Athanasius (who had helped him

1. Bar-Senaya, p. 159; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, pp. 308-310.

2. Michael, vol. 2, p. 464; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, pp. 308-310; cf. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 649. (A.M. 6236).

to become a Patriarch by cheating the bishops and the Metropolitans).¹ The Patriarch also gave Āmid and its environs to a man called Severus, but the people of Āmid rejected this proposal so strongly that the Patriarch had to withdraw his orders.² In this way the Patriarch annoyed many of his bishops, such as Athanasius, al-Ṣandalī, the bishop of Mayyāfāriqīn, Bacchos, the bishop of Nineveh, Athanasius, the bishop of Ra's al-'Ayn and Qaryaqos, the bishop of Hazayā.

Al-Ṣandalī was the outstanding bishop in this conflict and he took the matter to be judged before the Umayyad caliph. He accused the Patriarch in the court of Marwān II of collecting 1,500 silver coins from Tikrīt and the east, of taking bribes in the ordination of bishops, of having illegal sexual relationships and of employing magic in the exercising of the duties of his post. The Patriarch himself accused al-Ṣandalī of having affairs with many women in spite of his being married.³

Under the influence of al-Ṣandalī, Marwān II put the Patriarch in prison in Ḥarrān and sent two people with al-Ṣandalī to try the Patriarch. They went to Ḥarrān, tried the Patriarch and confiscated all his money. The Patriarch stayed in prison until

1. Bar-Senaya, p. 159.

2. Michael, vol. 2, p. 467; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 310.

3. Michael, vol. 2, p. 468; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 312.

the 'Abbāsīd revolution in 132 A.H./750 A.D. when he was released.¹

It is interesting to speculate why these dissensions should have occurred in the time of the Patriarch Iwannis. The sources available at present do not provide any answer to this question. Probably these dissensions did not happen earlier because the Umayyad caliphs had been strong and had exercised a firm control over their domains while in the late Umayyad period the caliphate reached a low ebb of weakness. In other words, when the Umayyad caliphate was strong, the Christians did not dare to make trouble and could not afford to have overt internal disputes in furtherance of their own personal ambitions because they knew that the caliphate would punish them.² When the caliphate became weak, however, these differences came to the surface. This implies that the strength of the caliphate maintained at the same time the unity of the Church.

All through this period of strife, at the end of the Umayyad supremacy, there was discord and instability amongst the Christians in the other areas of the Jazīra.

1. Michael, vol. 2, p. 469; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 312.

2. Cf. Chronica Minrota, ed. in (SCOS) ed. I. Guidi, Ser III, vol. 4, p. 55. A short description of this work is given elsewhere in this thesis, p. and cf. the story about Mu'āwiya's punishment of the Jacobites on p. 193 in this work.

In particular the chair of Ṭūr 'Abidīn remained vacant and there were many disputes among the bishops and the Metropolitans about a suitable person to fill the chair.¹ Finally, Qaryaqos, who was the Metropolitan of Sijistān, and a friend of Marwān II, managed to obtain an order from the caliph to the Patriarch Iwannis saying to him "Do not ordain a bishop (sic) to Ṭūr 'Abidīn unless I order you to do so."²

Eventually, Qaryaqos himself became the Metropolitan of Ṭūr 'Abidīn and Ḥiṣn Kayfa. He then bribed Gabriel, the Metropolitan of Qarṭimīn, who had sided with the Patriarch against him,³ by giving him "a very small corner of Ṭūr 'Abidīn" while the other bishops were given nothing.⁴

This very significant incident would appear to be the only example mentioned in either Islamic or Christian sources of direct caliphal intervention and involvement in Church appointments in the Jazīra in the Umayyad period. It is important to note here that this intervention on the part of the caliph occurred at a time when the Church was in a weak and divided state. During most of the Umayyad period, it would appear that the Christian Church was stable and that the caliphs

1. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 464-465.

2. Ibid., p. 467.

3. Ibid., p. 468.

4. Ibid., pp. 469, 472-473.

seem for the most part to have left the Christian Church to run itself autonomously with the proviso that it was under their overall control.¹ Even in this case, with Marwān II, it seems that the initiative came from the Christians themselves towards the caliph, who was brought in on one side of the controversy. Marwān II did not intervene of his own accord.

Michael the Syrian comments on the above split as follows:

"The Patriarch tried to reform the Church by acting according to the clerical rule that states: no bishop is to be ordained without the approval of the Metropolitan, but the eastern bishops who were without spiritual education created many problems for the Patriarch in order to weaken the Church and to keep their posts."²

Michael the Syrian calls the eastern bishops who were without spiritual education the enemies of the Church.³

As well as being torn apart by power struggles in the late Umayyad period, the Christian Church in the Jazīra was further weakened by the financial ambitions of the merchant class. According to Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē, the rich people and the merchants in this period managed to gain control of the churches which they

1. Cf. the discussion on pp. 147-150.

2. Ibid., pp. 465-466.

3. Ibid., p. 468.

organised in such a way that they could obtain financial benefits for themselves. This was especially the case with the rates of usury.¹

Many of the internal conflicts within the Christian Church could well have been caused, at least partially, by the decline of personal moral standards amongst church leaders and the clergy. In spite of the strictness and exactness of the rules imposed on the clergy,² the clergy did not adhere to them. This lapse caused many troubles for the Church. In the synodicon that took place in 57 A.H./676 A.D. it was mentioned that most of the clergy did not obey the clerical rules and caused many problems to the Nestorian Church.³ This problem led John Bar Penkayē, who lived in the second half of the seventh century A.D. to write about the decline and fall of monastic life in the Nestorian Church.⁴ According to Bar-Penkayē, during the second Islamic civil war (64-73 A.H./682-692 A.D.), "the convents and monasteries had been destroyed. The saints went away to another land and the monks wandered

1. P. 92.

2. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 2, pp. 161-189.

3. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 134; Chabot, op. cit., pp. 483-486.

4. I.E. Raḥmānī, Studia Syrica Collectio Documentorum, (Beirut, 1904), p. 35.

in all directions."¹

Al-Marjī also gives the impression that there was a marked disunity in the Nestorian Church and decline in monastic standards about the end of the 1st century A.H./7th c. A.D. He relates that "Each country, town, monastery and school had its own hymns and songs of praise and tunes, and sang them in its own way, and if a teacher or scholar happened to be away from his own school he was obliged to stand silent like an ignorant."²

It would appear that the Jacobites also did not respect their clerical rules and tried to modernise them. John, the bishop of Edessa from 60-61 A.H./679-680 A.D. who died in 90 A.H./708 A.D. was very strict in the enforcement of the clerical rules and thereby offended a section of his clergy. It seems that he condemned this movement of modernisation. He went therefore to the gate of the convent of Julian at Edessa crying aloud "I burn with a fire as superfluous and useless as the canons which you trample underfoot and heed not."³ Moreover, he made many attacks on those who tried to transgress the law of God, and showed them what Christianity was.

1. Op. cit., p. 189*.

2. Pp. 125-126.

3. Michael, vol. 2, p. 446; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 292. Cf. A. Voobus, "The Discovery of New Cycles of Canons and Resolutions Composed by Ja'qōb of Edessa" ed. in Orientalia Christiana Periodica, (Rome, 1968) vol. 34, pp. 412-419.

He claimed that it was the oldest of all religions¹ and he called those who wanted modernisation "the impious".²

IV. The building of churches and monasteries

As already discussed, the peace treaties that the Muslims signed with the towns in the Jazīra apparently guaranteed the Christians peace and ownership of their place of worship, but they did not mention any right to build new churches or monasteries.³ In fact, some of the peace treaties specifically state that the Christians should not build any new churches.⁴ This is confirmed in the writings of the fūqahā', who were agreed that the building of new churches or synagogues in the Islamic towns or cities was prohibited.⁵

As will be seen in this chapter, the evidence of the sources, however, shows that these peace treaties even if they are authentic were not observed rigidly either by the Muslims or by the Christians. It is clear

1. W. Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum (London 1870) part 2, pp. 984, 996.

2. Ibid., p. 996.

3. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 172-174; Abū Yūsuf, pp. 23-24.

4. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 172-174.

5. Al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf, pp. 236-238; Abū Yūsuf, p. 88.

that many churches and monasteries were built in the Jazīra between 17-132 A.H./638-750 A.D. by the Christians and sometimes even by the Muslims themselves.¹ It is interesting to speculate on what motives led the Muslims to allow the Christians to erect religious building. Often the Muslims acted from political motives. For example, Mu'āwīya I (41-60 A.H./661-680 A.D.) rebuilt the church in al-Ruhā which had been brought down by an earthquake.² This occurred when he was on his way to fight 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib,³ in 37 A.H./657 A.D., in the hope that the Christians might help him against 'Alī. This they did.⁴

1. It is interesting to note that Bar-Hebraeus states that Mar-Ishū'yab II the Nestorian Catholicos obtained a covenant from the Prophet Muḥammad which specified that the Muslims "would help the Christians in the repairing of their old churches.", vol. 3, p. 118. As is often the case with Bar-Hebraeus, this statement is very dubious. The first Islamic sources do not mention such a covenant, nor do the earliest Christian sources available at present. It is therefore very probable that Bar-Hebraeus or his immediate sources forged this evidence at a later date for motives of their own.

2. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 544 (A.M. 6170).

3. Agabius, op. cit., p. 352.

4. Cf. pp. 121-123 in this thesis.

Sometimes the Muslims built monasteries for the Christians because of their good relationship with the Christian clergy or for more personal reasons. One such Muslim was 'Utba b. Farqad, the governor of Mosul (20 A.H./640 A.D.), who built a monastery for al-Rubān Hirmizd, as well as making a special endowment for this monastery.¹ Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-Malik, the governor of Mosul (65 A.H./684 A.D.) built a monastery for his Christian doctor, Sa'īd, who succeeded in curing him of a very serious illness.²

The Christians themselves built many monasteries in the Jazīra. Amongst such building patrons was Mar Uthā the Maphrian of the Jacobites in Tikrīt, who built a splendid monastery called the Monastery of Mar-Sirjis. He also spent a great deal of money on making it a good place for refugees.³ Athanasius, a native of al-Ruhā whom 'Abd al-Malik favoured, built a baptistery in al-Ruhā and placed in it the image of Christ which had been sent to Abgar the king of Edessa (al-Ruhā). Athanasius also made a fountain similar to that which

1. Ibn Mattī, p. 55.

2. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 669; Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A'yān, ed. I. 'Abbās (Beirut, 1970), vol. 3, p. 406.

3. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, p. 124.

the bishop Amonius had built in the old church in Edessa. This he decorated with gold and silver and covered it with brass. Athanasius donated the revenue of his shops and other property at al-Ruhā for the construction of two churches in about 81 A.H./700 A.D.¹

Most of the Jacobite Maphrians built churches in Tikrīt. Amongst these may be numbered Bar-Jesus who built a fine church which he dedicated to the famous martyrs, Sirjīs and Bacchos.² Danha II did likewise.³ The Nestorians built a church outside the walls of Tikrīt, following strenuous efforts made by their Catholicos, Ṣalībā Zachā.⁴

Many Metropolitans and bishops also built monasteries and churches. For example, in 65 A.H./684 A.D. a strong fort was built in the monastery of Ṭūr ‘Abidīn.⁵ In 81 A.H./700 A.D. the Metropolitan of Ḥarrān built a monastery in Ḥarrān and restored the church of Hibsans.⁶

1. Michael, vol. 2, p. 448; Chronography, p. 105.

2. Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 134.

3. Ibid., p. 148.

4. Ibid., p. 156.

5. I.A. Barṣūm, Tārīkh Ṭūr ‘Abidīn, trans. G.B. Bahrām (Baghdad, 1963), p. 206.

6. Ibid., p. 346.

About 98 A.H./716 A.D. Mar-Sham'ūn, the bishop of the same city, built a church called the Church of Naṣībīn.¹ Around 125 A.H./742 A.D. Ishū'-yāb, the Metropolitan of Bīth 'Āba, pulled down the temple of the church which Mar-Ishū'-yab, the Nestorian Catholicos, (30-38 A.H./650-658 A.D. had built of mud, and rebuilt it of lime.² In addition to these, many other monasteries were built in different places.³

This activity of building churches and monasteries in the Umayyad period must have annoyed some Muslims greatly and prompted them to persuade the governors and caliphs to stop this building or to destroy these churches. This may well have prompted the caliph al-Walīd I (86-96 A.H./705-715 A.D.) to order the destruction of "all churches."⁴ A similar attitude was adopted by Umar II (99-101 A.H./717-720 A.D.) who commanded his governors not to destroy existing churches but not to approve the building of new ones.⁵ Yazīd II (101-105 A.H./720-724 A.D.) also ordered "all churches to be destroyed," but he

1. The Chronicle of the Year 846, p. 582; Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 270.

2. Al-Marjī, pp. 171-179.

3. Yashū' Danha, op. cit., pp. 56, 67.

4. Michael, vol. 2, p. 451.

5. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 572; Michael, vol. 2, p. 456; Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 527.

died before his order was carried out.¹

The above information would tend to suggest that the early Umayyad caliphs were generally very tolerant to the Christians, whilst most of the later ones were not. Von Kremer analyses this point as follows:

"Most of the Umayyad caliphs passed their time in places of entertainment; they therefore gave the Christians a great deal of latitude."²

This point of view is rather simplistic. The most important Umayyad caliphs helped and liked the Christians because they realised that the Christians were useful to them both in war and in peace.³ This realistic, pragmatic approach can be seen in the early Umayyad caliphs' tolerant attitude to Christians building churches and monasteries. The reasons for the shift in attitude amongst certain later Umayyad caliphs are complex and difficult to discern. Inconsistencies occurred even in

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1. Ibn al-Muqaffa', Tārīkh al-Baṭāriqa, ed. and trans. B. Evetts in PO, vol. 5, (1910), p. 72. The author was a bishop of Ashmūnayn, a town in upper Egypt, who lived in the mid tenth century A.D. He was among the Coptic Christians who wrote in Arabic; Michael, vol. 2, p. 457.
 2. Al-Ḥaḍāra al-Islāmiyya, Arabic trans. M.T. Badr, (Cairo, 1947), p. 65.
 3. Cf. pp. 121-126, 191-194 of this thesis.

the attitudes of one and the same caliph at different times, as in the case of Marwān II and his relationship with the Christians.¹

V. Icons²

It is generally accepted that the veneration of images arose in Christianity from man's inability to grasp the full meaning of incarnation. The use and veneration of images in churches had developed into a regular cult by the sixth century and had continued to grow until the eighth century.³ Both Monophysites and Nestorians made images of Christ; the former depicted Christ both in his human and divine aspects, whilst the latter predictably stressed his humanity.⁴

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1. Cf. the discussion on pp. 162-164.
 2. Unfortunately we know little about the early history of icons, beyond what can be learnt from the writings of those who supported icons and who ultimately won the day.
 3. E. Browne, The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia, (Cambridge, 1933), p. 74.
 4. Ibid., p. 75. The period under discussion in this thesis falls within the time of iconoclasm. In 108 A.H./726 A.D. the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (99-123 A.H./717-740 A.D.) ordered the removal and destruction of all icons in the churches. Cf./

Al-Wāqidī mentions the existence of icons in the Jazīra at the time of the Islamic conquest of that area. He relates that the Muslims found in the church of Mayyāfāriqīn the picture of Jesus and his cradle and the picture of his mother.¹ The Umayyad poet 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a (d. 93 A.H./711 A.D.) describes icons and those people who made them. He relates that the icons were fixed beside the altar.² Al-Akhṭal states that all

/Cf. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 623 (A.M. 6218).

This religious controversy continued until 164 A.H./780 A.D. then reemerged from 198-229 A.H./813-843 A.D. until the Byzantine emperor finally recognised icons. Cf. A. Rustam, Kanīsat Madīnat Allah Anṭākiya, (Beirut, 1954), vol. 2, p. 79; K.S. Latourett, A History of Christianity, (London, 1964), pp. 295-297; E. Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, (London, 1923), vol. 5, p. 251.

1. Vol. 2, p. 109.

2. Al-Mubarrad, al-Kāmil, ed. M.A.F. Ibrāhīm and S. Shaḥāta, (Cairo, 1956), vol. 2, p. 241.

Cf. al-Baghdādī, Khazānat al-Adab, (Cairo, 1348 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 414.

the churches¹ and the monasteries² contained icons.

As is well-known, the Byzantine emperor, Leo III (99-123 A.H./717-740 A.D.), was against icons. Scholars differ on the reasons that caused Leo III to order the destruction of icons. One view held is that he wanted to make friends with the Muslims who considered icons to be mere idols. Another view has it that he wanted to take possession of the icons, which were an important source of precious metals, and to make the common people less under the thumb of the church and clergy, whom he wished to weaken.³ Lombard in particular suggests that the iconoclast movement in Byzantium and in the Muslim

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1. Ibid., p. 412. I have looked in the Dīwāns of these two poets but I have not found these references mentioned by al-Baghdadī.
 2. P. 12. For more detail, cf. al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 144 (art:- Ṣawwara). Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 661; al-ʿUmarī, Masālik al-Abṣār, ed. A. Zakī, (Cairo, 1924), vol. 1, pp. 271, 302.
 3. G. Every, The Byzantine Patriarchate, (London, 1962) pp. 87-88; A. al-Yūsuf, Al-Impirāṭūriyya al-Bizantiyya, (Beirut, 1966), pp. 105-106; G. Finlay, History of the Byzantine Empire, (Edinburgh and London, 1852) pp. 22, 42-3; A. Rustam, Ḥarb fi'l Kanā'is, (Beirut, 1958), p. 22; idem, Al-Rūm, (Beirut, 1955), vol. 1, p. 303.

world sprang^{up}/because of economic motives. The two empires faced economic crisis and their sovereigns therefore became iconoclasts to recover the gold from the churches and treasures from the monasteries.¹

M.V. Anastos denies these reasons and suggests that Leo III "took them - the images - to be idols and as such forbidden by the Scriptures."²

The original Christian sources such as Theophanes and Michael the Syrian corroborate the theory of those who see Islamic influences here. The former refers to Leo III as "Muslim minded".³ The latter says that "Leo III ordered the destruction of all the images from the churches and houses, because he wanted to imitate the Muslims."⁴ Although citing no clear sources, Gibbon expatiates further on this point. He says that Leo's attitude may have been caused by "his education, his intercourse with Jews and Arabs."⁵

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1. The Golden Age of Islam, (Amsterdam, 1975), p. 105.
 2. "Iconoclasm and Imperial Rule 717-842" in The Cambridge Medieval History, (Cambridge, 1966), vol. IV, pp. 61-62, 66.
 3. Op. cit., p. 623 (A.M. 6218).
 4. Vol. 2, p. 457.
 5. Op. cit., p. 251; cf. G. Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, trans. J. Hussey, (Oxford, 1956), pp. 142-143; cf. A.A. Vasiliev, History of the Byzantine Empire, trans. S. Ragozin, (Madison, 1928), p. 312.

Sahas suggests that there is "a certain connection between the iconoclastic movements of the Christians and of the Muslims."¹

Browne argues that there can be little doubt that the iconoclastic movement in Europe was influenced by the persecution by the caliph Yazīd II (101-105 A.H./720-724 A.D.), of those Christians who used images.²

On the other hand, Anastos denies any connection between the iconoclastic movement of the Christians and that of the Muslims; he believes that at its roots Byzantine iconoclasm is a Christological question "as the latter history of the controversy indicates."³ He goes on to write as follows:

"On the other hand, it is hardly to be supposed that a Byzantine emperor engaged in a deadly struggle for existence with the Arabs would deliberately adopt from the enemy a characteristically Muslim attitude towards an article of Christian theology."⁴

At Damascus, St. John (d. 131 A.H./749 A.D.)

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1. John of Damascus on Islam, the "Heresy of Ishmaelites", (Leiden, 1972), p. 10.
 2. Op. cit., p. 74.
 3. Op. cit., p. 68.
 4. Op. cit., p. 67.

entered the arena against Leo III and defended icons as the ancient and lawful heritage of Christian people. Moreover, he stirred up the faithful to resist and to ignore the edict and explained why Christians should respect images.¹ The Byzantine response to this action was that the emperor held a clerical council in 112 A.H./730 A.D. in which John of Damascus was excommunicated.² Since John was out of reach of Byzantium, for he lived in Damascus, he replied with even greater zeal and eloquence than before.

The Umayyad caliphate also was against icons. Yazīd II commanded in 103 A.H./723 A.D. that the images of every living being should be obliterated from the churches ("temples"), walls, wooden panels, stones, books and clothes.³ But this order was not executed

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1. St. John Damascene, op. cit., pp. 281-282. Idem, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, in Aselect Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, (Oxford and New York), vol. IX, p. 88. Idem, On Holy Images, trans. M.H. Allies, (London, 1898); E. Bevan, Holy Images, (London, 1939), pp. 126-146; Rustam, Ḥarb fi'l-Kanā'is, p. 35; Finlay, op. cit., p. 43.
 2. Michael, vol. 2, p. 473.
 3. Tell-Mahrē, p. 17; Theophanes, op. cit., p. 617; The Chronicle of the Year 846, p. 584; Michael,/

because of his death shortly afterwards.¹ Three years later, in 108 A.H./726 A.D., Leo III issued an edict against icons.² Whether Yazīd's orders influenced the decision of Leo III to issue a similar edict and to what extent, is a question which needs more careful study. Certain Christian sources relate a story in this connection involving a certain Jew who convinced the caliph Yazīd II that he should destroy all the icons.³

The governor of the Jazīra, Muḥammad, the brother of 'Abd al-Malik, (73-91 A.H./692-709 A.D.), found this problem a good opportunity to compel the Christians of al-Ruhā to pay more money. He is reported to have said,

/Michael, vol. 2, p. 457; Chronography, p. 109; Ibn al-Muqaffa', op. cit., pp. 72-73; al-Kindī, Kitāb al-Wulāt wa Kitāb al-Qudāt, (Beirut, 1908), p. 71.

1. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 618 (A.M. 6215).
2. Ibid., p. 623; Michael, vol. 2, p. 457.
3. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 617; Acts of the 7th Synod (787 A.D.) ed. J.D. Mansī, (Sacrorum Conciliorum, Nova et amplissima Collectio, (Paris and Leipzig, 1902), vol. 13, pp. 197-198. These two sources relate that the Jew promised the caliph Yazid II long life and a reign of 30 years if he would order the immediate removal and destruction of all the images. Al-Ṭabarī relates that a Jew foretold Yazīd II's 40 years' reign, vol. 7, p. 22.

"Either the people of Edessa (al-Ruhā) will pay five thousand dinars or I will destroy all the images."

The Christians of al-Ruhā wanted to keep their icons so much that because of their not having the money they borrowed it from the favourite of 'Abd al-Malik, Athanasius, who agreed to lend them the money on condition that he took possession of the icons until the people had paid him back. When the people settled their debts with Athanasius he did not give them back the original images but very skilfully made replicas of the originals.¹

The Muslims also sold a Christian shroud to Athanasius at a high price of fifty thousand dinars. He put it in the church of al-Ruhā, and the people used to come to see it during the festivals. A later Patriarch of Antioch called John ordered that the shroud should not be shown to the people, lest it should be ruined.²

A study of the relationship between the caliphate and the Byzantine Empire at the time when Byzantium was against icons, reveals that the good relationship which the caliphate enjoyed with Byzantium at that particular time may well have caused the

caliphate to "wage war" against icons in order to continue to be on good terms with Byzantium. When

1. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 448-9.

2. Michael the Grand, op. cit., pp. 247-248.

this good relationship deteriorated, the caliphate stopped its fight against icons. There is good evidence in the sources which corroborates this theory. For example, at the time of Yazīd II, according to the Islamic and Christian sources, peaceful relations existed between Byzantium and Islam. In 103 A.H./623 A.D. Yazīd II ordered the destruction of all the icons.¹ Since Yazīd II generally tried to imitate Umar II's policies, he probably was acting in this way to persuade Leo III to become a Muslim as 'Umar II had tried to do before.²

On another occasion, in 108 A.H./726 A.D., the Muslims had scored a victory against Byzantium,³ so Leo III, thinking that iconodules were Muslim supporters, passed his first royal edict against the veneration of images.⁴ Significantly, on this occasion the caliphate took no action against the iconodules. Later on, but still in the reign of Hishām, (105-125 A.H./724-743 A.D.) the relationship between the caliphate and the Byzantines deteriorated because of the wars between them,⁵ and the caliphate allowed the

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1. Tell-Mahrē, p. 17; Theophanes, op. cit., p. 618; al-Kindī, op. cit., p. 71.
 2. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 614 (A.M. 6210).
 3. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, p. 43.
 4. I.E. Raḥmānī, Mukhtaṣar Tawārīkh al-Qurūn al-Mutawaṣṣiṭa, (Mosul, 1877), p. 93.
 5. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, pp. 40-160; Michael, vol. 2, p. 463; Chronography, p. 110.

Christians to restore the images.¹

It is noteworthy that after many victories for Byzantium against the Muslims, a fresh persecution of the iconoclasts inside the Byzantine state was ordered by the Byzantine emperors. For example, when Leo III won the war against the Muslims in 99-101 A.H./717-720 A.D. he began persecuting the iconoclasts.² Again when Byzantium had a temporary victory between 126-128 A.H./744-746 A.D. against the Muslims, a fresh persecution of the iconoclasts was ordered by Constantine V (123-159 A.H./740-775 A.D.).³ On the other hand, the caliphate did not act against the iconoclasts during these two periods (99-101 A.H./717-720 A.D. and 126-128 A.H./744-746 A.D.).

The above analysis of the relationship between the Byzantine and the Muslim attitudes to icons suggests that Sahas is quite right when he says that there is "a certain connection between the iconoclastic movements of the Christians and of the Muslims."⁴

1. Anastos, op. cit., p. 66.

2. Rustam, Tārīkh al-Rūm, p. 274; Every, op. cit., p. 87; Raḥmānī, op. cit., p. 93.

3. Ostrogorsky, op. cit., pp. 148-149; Latourett, op. cit., p. 296; Anastos, op. cit., p. 72.

4. Op. cit., p. 10.

VI. The relationship between the Muslim authorities
and prominent Christian personalities within their
territories

Islamic tradition insists that the people of the Book should be treated kindly. The Prophet said that if anybody burdened any of the people of the Book more than they could endure, he would be "his opponent until the Day of Judgement."¹ 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb before his death said "I recommend my successor to comply with covenants made with those under the protection of the Prophet, to protect them from those who persecute them and to abstain from charging them with more than they can bear."² There are many similar traditions on this subject.

On the other hand, Abu 'l-Faraj reports a tale illustrating severe treatment by the Prophet towards al-Jarrār, the chief of the Banu Taghlib, a Christian Arab tribe. He relates that "al-Jarrār was ... contemporary to the Prophet. He strongly refused to be converted to the faith of Islam."³ The Prophet asked Zayd al-Khayl to use force of arms to make al-Jarrār adopt the faith of Islam. Zayd killed al-Jarrār after he had refused to declare his belief in Islam.⁴

1-2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 71; cf. Ibn Ādam, pp. 54-55.

3. Vol. 17, p. 259.

4. Vol. 17, p. 259.

This is an interesting but isolated example of a story which seems to suggest severe treatment by the Prophet of a Christian who refused to convert to Islam.

Politically, it would have been unlikely that the Prophet would have wished to antagonise the Banu Taghlib in this way since he was well aware of their strength.¹

Under the Rightly Guided Caliphs (11-41 A.H./632-661 A.D.) the Christians had much freedom. This is shown by a letter attributed to Ishū'-yāb III (d. 41 A.H./661 A.D.), the Nestorian Catholicos, to Simean Revardashīr in Fārs in which he says:

"Those Arabs ... are with us ... they have not attacked the Christian religion ... they have commended our faith, honoured our priests and the saints of the Lord and conferred benefits on churches and monasteries."²

1. Cf. chapter 2, p. 89; cf. chapter 6, p. 275.

2. Iso'yaba III Liber Epistularum, ed. B. Duval, (Paris, 1904), p. 182 (ed. in CSCO, ii, 64). This source is a collection of about 106 letters written by Ishū'-yāb III to different clergy who were under his jurisdiction. The letters were compiled by Duval. The Syriac texts are given, together with the Latin translations. The letters give an idea of the internal troubles which beset the Nestorian Church during that period. The earliest date of /

Young comments on Ishū'yab III's letter by saying:

"It is clear that Ishū'yab did not get all this favour for nothing."¹

Young refers here to Marī who states that Ishū'yab III had been given by the Muslim authorities "a Diploma in which a warning was given that no one was to make trouble for him in respect of his own monasteries, or see, or revenue, or household immunities - with only small charge exacted for these things. They asked him each week what he needed; or he asked for whatever could be useful for the affairs of the Christians."²

The third caliph, Uthmān b. 'Affān (d. 35 A.H./ 656 A.D.) favoured the Christians either because of the special skills or abilities which they possessed or through the influence of his Christian wife Nā'ila.³ One of these Christians was Abū Zubayd al-Ṭā'ī, the Taghlibi Christian poet who had been among the

/of these letters is apparently the end of the eighth century A.D.

Al-Sa'rdī gives similar information about the Christians' freedom under the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Cf. vol. 2, (FO. Vol. 13)p. 582.

1. Handbook of Source-Materials for Students of Church History up to 650 A.D. (Madras, 1969), p. 318, no. 4.
2. P. 62.
3. Cf. chapter 6 in this thesis, p. 258

attendants at royal courts, especially those of the Persian kings. Abū Zubayd was a learned biographer of kings as well as being an expert in Arabic poetry.¹

‘Uthmān made him his friend and offered him a seat near to him.² In addition to having a Christian as his private doctor,³ ‘Uthmān also employed a Christian as head of a prison near Kūfa.⁴

Al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba, the governor of Kūfa in the reign of ‘Uthmān, was a well-known drunkard; he had Abū Zubayd as a drinking companion.⁵ During the first Islamic civil war, al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba remained non-allied and went to al-Raqqa where Abū Zubayd joined him in his drinking orgies. Every Sunday al-Walīd and Abū Zubayd

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1. Abu ‘l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 127; al-Jumāhī, Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shu‘arā’, ed. M.M. Shākir, (Cairo, 1952), p. 505; Ibn Qutayba, al-Shi‘r wa al-Shu‘arā’, ed. A.M. Shākir, (Cairo, 1364 A.H.), vol. 1, pp. 260-261.
 2. Abu ‘l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 127, 132; vol. 5, p. 136. But al-Ṭabarī says that Abū Zubayd became a Muslim in the reign of ‘Umar I, cf. vol. 4, p. 273.
 3. Al-Baghdādī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 128.
 4. ‘Alī, op. cit., p. 338.
 5. Abu ‘l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 133, 135, 137; Ibn Qutayba, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 260; cf. al-Mas‘ūdī, Murūj, vol. 2, pp. 335-336; ‘Alī, op. cit., p. 346; Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 31.

held a party in a church in al-Raqqa.¹ Both friends willed that they should be buried beside each other after their death, which was actually done.²

In the Jazīra, because of the good relationship between 'Amr b. Sa'd al Anṣārī, the governor of the Jazīra in 20 A.H./640 A.D., and the Jacobite Patriarch in 10-19 A.H./631-648 A.D., John of al-Sadrat, Amr asked John to translate the Gospel into Arabic for him, but in such a way that Jesus should be called no divine title and there should be no mention of baptism or of the cross. But John replied, "Far be it from me to subtract one jot or one title from the Gospel even if all the darts and spears of your camp pierce me." Seeing his courage, Amr said, "Go and write as you please."³

'Amr had made this request of the Jacobite Patriarch probably because of the anti-Muslim apology movement started by the Christians at that time. 'Amr

1. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, p. 137; Ibn Qutayba, op. cit., p. 261.

2. Abu 'l-Faraj, ^{vol. 12} p. 138; vol. 5, p. 146; 'Alī, op. cit., p. 346.

3. Michael, vol. 2, p. 422; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 276. According to al-Mas'ūdī, the first Arabic translation of the Gospel was done in the 'Abbasīd period. Cf. al-Tanbīh, p. 112; cf. O'Leary, How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs, p. 68; Browne, op. cit., p. 14.

wanted to study the Gospel in Arabic in order to initiate a counter-apology. John, the Patriarch, himself wrote a letter concerning an interview he had with 'Amr. In this letter, John answered 'Amr's questions about Christian belief. John in his answers explains the main Christian doctrines, such as the incarnation, the Trinity and various aspects of Christian belief.¹ John's answers indicate that a peaceful exchange of ideas between Muslims and Christians was possible. In our present state of knowledge his answers are the first known Christian anti-Muslim apology.

J. Spencer Trimingham, however, suspects Michael's account of the Arabic translation of the Gospel. He writes:

"Little credence can be given to this story, and even if such a translation had been done, it is meaningless in

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1. F. Nau, "Un Colloque du Patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Aqaréens" in Journal Asiatique, (Paris, 1915), vol. 5, pp. 257-64; P. Crone and M. Cook, Hagarism, (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 11, 14; S.H. Griffith, "Chapter ten of the 'Scholion' : Theodor Bar Koni's apology for Christianity", in Orientalia Christiana Periodica, (Rome, 1981), vol. 74, p. 150.

the Christian context since it did not arise naturally out of a felt need of the Church."¹

Under the early Umayyads, the Christians in the Islamic umma had as much freedom as they had previously enjoyed under the best of their Christian governments. Mu'āwīya for example displayed great tolerance towards the Christians. His attitude sprang from both personal and political considerations. He was, after all, married to a Christian woman, Maysūn, who belonged to the famous Christian Arab tribe, Kalb. This tribe had assisted Mu'āwīya on a number of occasions against his enemies.² In any case, Mu'āwīya was always more of a statesman than a religious leader, and as a result, it was understandable that he should display a favourable attitude towards certain Christian groups who had helped him ever since the time when he had been governor of Syria.

The feeling of liking and respect was mutual; amongst those Christians who recorded their admiration for Mu'āwīya was John Bar-Penkayē who was a famous scholar from the Jazīra and a contemporary of Mu'āwīya.

1. Op. cit., p. 225.

2. Naṣr b. Muzāhim, op. cit., pp. 255, 332, 426-7, 447; G. Graf, Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur, (Rome, 1959), vol. 1, p. 54; L. Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrānīyya ba'da al-Islām, (Beirut, 1967), p. 63.

He writes:

"Justice spread in his reign, as did security and peace. All people obtained their freedom ... As long as Mu'āwiya reigned there was such great peace in the world that there was never anything like it."¹

Young comments on the above account as follows:

"Probably the reign of Mu'āwiya was not such a golden age as John paints it, but in comparison with the troubles of the decade following it seemed so."²

Wellhausen subscribes to the view of John Bar Penkayē; he writes that Mu'āwiya as a politician "was tolerant towards his Christian subjects and earned their grateful sympathies."³

According to Islamic sources, under the rule of Mu'āwiya the Christians were as well-off as they would have been under a good Christian government, because he restored their churches and appointed many Christians to government posts. Such Christians included Sarjūn b. Manṣūr, who was in charge of the financial administration of Syria, and his son John who later followed in his

1. Op. cit., p. 175; The Journal of al-Najm, (Mosul, 1929), p. 441.

2. Patriarch, Shah and Caliph, (Rawalpindi, 1974), p. 102.

3. Op. cit., p. 134.

father's footsteps.¹

The Christians of the Jazīra respected Mu'āwiya so much that the Jacobites and the Maronites (both of whom were Monophysites) brought their religious disputes to him to act as arbitrator. According to The History of the Maronites, the Jacobite bishops, Theodore and Sabukt, came to Damascus and disputed with the Maronites in the presence of Mu'āwiya about the Christian faith. The Jacobites were worsted in the dispute, so Mu'āwiya ordered them to pay twenty thousand dinars. He ordered them to make peace, and decreed that it should be the practice that the Jacobite bishops should pay him this sum every year to protect them from the Maronite Church. The Patriarch of the Jacobites imposed a tax on all monks, nuns and other members of the Church in order to pay this sum.²

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 180; al-Jahshiyārī, al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Kuttāb, ed. M. al-Saqa, (Cairo, 1930), p. 24; al-Sūlī, Adab al-Kuttāb, ed. M.B. al-Atharī, (Cairo, 1341 A.H.), p. 192. Sarjūn used to be the drinking companion for Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya. Cf. Ansāb, vol. 4, part 2, p. 2.
 2. Chronica Minrota, ed. Guidi in CSCO, (Paris, 1903), vol. 4, p. 55. This source is a collection of eastern Christian writings compiled by Chabot, Guidi and others. The Syriac texts are given together with the Latin translation; they are of mixed date but/

According to Bar-Penkayē, the Monophysites benefited from the protection of Mu'āwīya and obtained control of the Church of Syria. This protection caused a large scale conversion of Malkites to Monophysitism.¹

From the reign of 'Abd al-Malik (65-86 A.H./685-705 A.D.) until the downfall of the Umayyad caliphate, the Christians' status depended on the attitude of individual governors and on the relationship of the

caliphate with the Byzantine Empire.² This meant that at certain times many Christian personalities suffered a great deal from the caliphs and the governors whilst others at different times were favoured and respected by the caliphs and the governors.

The earliest Islamic and Christian sources contain a number of accounts that throw light on this relationship, in the period after the death of Mu'āwīya. Such sources include Al-Kāmil fī'l-Adab,³ the work of al-Mubarrad, who states that the chiefs of the Banu Taghlib used to visit 'Abd al-Malik and discuss various topics with him. Sham'ala was one such chief. He once addressed 'Abd al-Malik in such a way that 'Abd al-Malik became so angry that he hit him hard with an iron bar,

/but the history of the Maronites is apparently from the eighth century A.D.

1. Op. cit., p. 175.

2. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 456, 463.

3. Ed. M.A. Ibrāhīm, (Cairo, 1956).

hurting him.¹ Although the sources available at present do not mention the details of Sham'ala's words, they probably concerned Islam.

Evidence to support this emerges later, in the accounts of the reign of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (86-96 A.H./705-715 A.D.). The following anecdote is related in a number of sources.

Al-Walīd said to Sham'ala: "As you are the chief of the Arabs of Taghlib you disgrace all of them when you worship the cross. Therefore do what I wish and become a Muslim."

Sham'ala replied: "Because I am a chief of all the Arabs of Taghlib, I am afraid lest I may become the cause of the destruction of all of them for if I deny Christ they will deny him also."

When al-Walīd heard these words he commanded his slaves to drag Sham'ala away face down and to cast him out. Then al-Walīd sent him a message in which he swore that if Sham'ala really would not agree to do what he said, al-Walīd would make him eat his own flesh. When Sham'ala did not give way, even under this threat, a slice of flesh was cut off his thigh, roasted on the fire and thrust into his mouth. When, however, Sham'ala persisted in his refusal to embrace Islam even after this, al-Walīd let him be, and Sham'ala continued to lead a normal life whilst the wound

1. Vol. 1, p. 158.

remained visible on his body.¹

This story indicates that Sham'ala was very sincere in his religion and that he was prepared to resist all attempts to make him change his faith. His stubborn refusal to give up Christianity was probably motivated to a great extent by a conviction on his part that Christianity was the best way in which he could preserve the independence, unity and special characteristics of his tribe, the Banu Taghlib.

Also in the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, the governor of the Jazīra, Muḥammad b. Marwān, sent a message to Mu'āth, the chief of the Banu Taghlib, urging him to be converted to the faith of Islam. When Mu'āth refused, the governor cast him into a muddy pit. He then brought him out again and tried again to persuade him but when Mu'āth was still reluctant to change his faith, the governor ordered him to be killed. Muḥammad b. Marwān also ordered the killing of other Christian Arabs who refused to be converted to Islam.² He threw the bodies of those who were killed to the wild animals and birds.³ During his residence at al-Ruhā he assembled Armenians in a church and set fire to the building. He also killed Anastasius, son of Andrew,

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1. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 451-2; Chronography, p. 106; Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 11, p. 282.
 2. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 450-1; Chronography, p. 104.
 3. Michael the Grand, op. cit., p. 249.

the administrator of the city, and plundered his house.¹ This persecution of the Christians in the Jazīra by Muḥammad b. Marwān is not surprising. It was he who also had charge of the conduct of military campaigns into Asia Minor and Armenia. A greater and a smaller campaign were undertaken each year against Byzantium, the Jazīra was kept constantly at war against Byzantium² and the Christians of the Jazīra were naturally suspected of being spies for Byzantium.

An anti-Christian policy was energetically pursued by the caliph al-Walīd I. The following anecdote illustrates this point.

A'shā Banu Taghlib, a Christian poet, was afraid of the caliph al-Walīd I.³ He praised Sham'ala the chief of the Banu Taghlib when al-Walīd I persecuted him.⁴ A'shā praised Sham'ala because of his faithful adherence to his religion, but A'shā did that in a clever way to avoid the caliph's anger. He said that what had happened to Sham'ala would honour him because it had come from the commander of the faithful and so

1. Michael, vol. 2, p. 449; Chronography, p. 104.

Cf. al-Ya'qūbī, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 18.

2. Cf. E.W. Brooks, "The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750 A.D.) from Arabic Sources", in the Journal of Hellenic Studies, (London, 1898), vol. 18, pp. 189-193.

3. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 11, p. 282.

4. Cf. p. 195 in this chapter.

it could not be shameful because it was only God's will.¹ The friendly relationship between A'shā and the caliph al-Walīd I continued after this.

In general, Islamic sources stress that al-Walīd I was a pious Muslim and that he was responsible for the building of many new mosques and destroying the Church of St. John at Damascus.² Such sources, not surprisingly, do not overtly mention, however, that al-Walīd pursued a policy which involved persecution of Christians. On the other hand, Michael the Syrian, who regards the advent of Islam as a liberation for Monophysite Christianity from the oppression of Byzantium, stresses that al-Walīd's policy towards the Christians was a hostile one. It is not unlikely, therefore, that his information is accurate. According to Michael the Syrian, al-Walīd I hated the Christians. He ordered that they should be compelled to renounce their religion and to embrace the faith of Islam and that anyone who refused to do so should be killed. Many Christians preferred death to renouncing their religion.³ Al-Walīd also ordered the killing of

1. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 11, p. 282.

2. Al-Baladhurī, pp. 47, 125-126; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, pp. 435-437, 496-499; Ibn 'Asākir, Tārīkh Dimashq, vol. 2, p. 41; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 591-593.

3. Michael the Grand, op. cit., p. 249.

Christians arrested in the war against Byzantium.¹ Hishām (105-125 A.H./724-744 A.D.) followed the same line after he heard that the Byzantines had killed their Muslim prisoners.²

It would appear that generally speaking the caliph 'Umar II (99-101 A.H./717-720 A.D.) pursued a strong anti-Christian policy. This emerges from both Christian and some Muslim sources. He obliged the Arab Christian tribe, the Banu Taghlib, to use pack-saddles when riding horses.³ When a deputation from the Banu Taghlib came to him, they were wearing turbans and said to him, "Oh commander of the faithful consider us as Arabs" (i.e. treat us as the Muslim Arabs are usually treated). He asked, "Are you Christians?" When they replied in the affirmative he called a barber and ordered him to cut off the hair from the front part of their heads and to tear off a part of their vestment.⁴

Because of the disgrace which came upon the Muslims through their withdrawal from Constantinople in 99-100 A.H./717-718 A.D., 'Umar II stopped the ringing of Christian bells in churches and ordered

1. Michael, vol. 2, p. 463.

2. Ibid.

3. Aḥmad al-Ibshīhī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 111;
Ibn al-Qayyim, vol. 2, p. 762.

4. Ibn al-Qayyim, vol. 2, p. 762; cf. Aḥmad al-Ibshīhī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 111.

them not to lift up their voices in prayer.¹ He further commanded that weapons which were found in their houses should be confiscated,² that their crosses should be exhibited openly without breaking or destroying them,³ that their use of wine should be forbidden, the wine jars broken, the taverns shut⁴ and that the employment of the people of faiths other than Islam in Islamic posts should be forbidden.⁵

A'shā, a Christian poet who as already mentioned was a friend of al-Walīd I, recited a poem in praise of 'Umar II. 'Umar II said to him, "There is no claim on the Bayt al-Māl for the poets, and if there were, you Christians would have none."⁶

Certain Christian sources go even further than this.

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1. Chronography, pp. 108-109; Michael, vol. 2, p. 456.
 2. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, (Beirut, 1967), p. 159.
 3. Abū Yūsuf, p. 72.
 4. Al-Kindī, Kitāb al-Qudāt, (Beirut, 1908), p. 69; cf. Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 365.
 5. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, op. cit., p. 58; Ibn al-Jawzī, Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, (Cairo, 1331 A.H.), p. 100. Ghāzī b. al-Wāṣiṭī, "Answer to the dhimmis," ed. in JAOS, (Philadelphia, 1921), vol. 41, pp. 423-4.
 6. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 11, p. 283.

For example, Theophanes¹ and Michael² the Syrian relate that 'Umar II ordered that all Christians should convert to Islam, but none of the available Islamic sources, not even the two biographies of this caliph, make any reference to this policy. A more moderate picture of 'Umar II is drawn by some Islamic sources, where it is suggested that he safeguarded the Christians in the possession of their ancient churches and that he was willing to give back the Church of St. John to them.³ The Christians apparently lived in security and prosperity and their churches were safeguarded.⁴

Theophanes, writing of the second year of the caliphate of 'Umar II, says, "'Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz sent a theological epistle to the emperor Leo III thinking that he might persuade him to accept Islam."⁵ The emperor sent a reply to 'Umar II.⁶ Leo's reply "was full of sagacity as to put to shame the caliph, so that he set about reforming many abuses among the

1. Op. cit., p. 614 (A.M. 6210).

2. Vol. 2, p. 456.

3. Al-Balādhurī, p. 125; Ibn 'Asākir, Tārīkh Dimashq, vol. 2, p. 41.

4. Ibn al-Muqaffa', op. cit., pp. 71-72.

5. Op. cit., p. 614 (A.M. 6210); cf. Agabius, op. cit., p. 358.

6. Agabius, op. cit., p. 358.

Muslim people."¹ From this moment 'Umar II "commenced to treat the Christians with much kindness. He ameliorated their state, and showed himself very favourable towards them, so that on all hands were heard expression of thankfulness to him."²

No Muslim source available at present provides any information about such a correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III. However one Christian source, the Armenian history of Ghevond,³ reports in great detail

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1. A. Jeffery, "Ghevond's text of the correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III" in Harvard Theological Review, (Cambridge, 1944), vol. 37, p. 270.
 2. Ibid., p. 330. Cf. Barthold who writes:
" 'Umar II towards the end of his reign, treated the Christians better than before."
i.e. better than what he himself had done earlier. Op. cit., vol. 15, p. 83.
 3. Ghevond was a priest who wrote a history of Armenia. The work continued the history of Sebeos to the year 172 A.H./788 A.D. His dates are somewhat difficult to determine, but probably the author was among the writers of the 10th century A.D. Cf. A. Santoro, Byzantium and the Arabs During the Isaurian Period 717-802 A.D., (New Jersey, 1978), p. 41; Jeffery, op. cit., pp. 270-5. Crone and Cook, however, suggest that this work dates from the later eighth century, op. cit., p. 163, while Brooks suggests that this work "seems to/

the text of such a correspondence.¹

Commenting on Ghevond's text, Santoro writes as follows:

"Constant scrutiny has shown much of it to be not an actual translation of the early eighth century Byzantine document that it purports to be, but rather an eleventh - thirteenth century original Armenian composition."²

However, it is not improbable that such a correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III could have existed, especially in view of the well-known zeal of 'Umar II in the propagation of Islam.³

Other correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III took place concerning a matter different from that

/to have been written in the later half of the 9th century." Cf. "Notes and Documents" in English Historical Review, (New York and Bombay, 1900), vol. 15, p. 731.

1. For an account of the letter of 'Umar II to Leo III cf. Jeffery, op. cit., pp. 277-281. For the account of the reply of Leo III to 'Umar II see pp. 281-330.

Agabius records the summary of Leo's reply, op. cit., p. 358.

2. Op. cit., p. 193.

3. 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 209-219; cf. pp. 199-201 above.

reported above. According to al-Balādhurī, when the Byzantines destroyed al-Lāthiqīya in 100 A.H./718 A.D. and took many Muslims as captives, 'Umar II sent a letter to Leo III asking him to accept ransom for their liberation.¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam writes that the king of

Rūm, on hearing that 'Umar II had been poisoned, sent a letter to 'Umar II telling him that he thought so highly of him that he was sending the Ra'īs al-Asāqifa to treat him.² In the text of his reply to 'Umar's letter asking him to be a Muslim, as reported by Ghevond, Leo III refers to the "frequent correspondence" between the two men.³ This evidence suggests that there had been an exchange of letters between 'Umar II and Leo III on more than one occasion, in spite of al-Balādhurī's report that Leo III failed to respond to 'Umar's request positively.

It is interesting to note that Leo III's relations with the Muslims had begun before his coming to power, as he had spent his childhood in Mar'ash, a Muslim city in the far north of Syria. So Leo III must have been in constant contact with the Muslims in the city. According to Kitāb al-'Uyūn,⁴ Leo III could speak

1. P. 133.

2. Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, (Beirut, 1967), p. 116.

3. Jeffery, op. cit., p. 282.

4. Ed. Goeje, (Brill, 1869), vol. 3, p. 25. This work dates from the later 5th century A.H./11th century A.D. The author, who is unknown, does/

correctly both Greek and Arabic, and it is probable that he was well-acquainted with Islam as his reply to 'Umar II implies.¹ When Leo III came to power and managed to defeat the Muslim armies in 99-100 A.H./717-718 A.D. he was nicknamed "Champion of Christianity against the Muslims"² and his zeal for the propagation of Christianity was noteworthy.³ These facts substantiate the possibility of correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III. Moreover, an emperor like Leo III who kept up a constant correspondence with John of Damascus concerning the controversy between them about images might well have conducted a similar correspondence with 'Umar II.

Turning now to the caliphate of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, Ibn al-Muqaffa' relates that Hishām "was a God-fearing man according to the standards of Islam, and he loved all men and he became the deliverer of the Malkites." When he learnt that the Malkites had had no Patriarch in the east he took a man named Athanasius and gave him the Patriarchate of Antioch. Athanasius the Patriarch wrote praising Hishām, "We bless the

/does not mention his sources but it is clear that his chief authorities were al-Wāqidī and al-Madā'inī.

1. Jeffery, op. cit., pp. 295-6.
2. Ibid., p. 272.
3. Anastos, op. cit., pp. 61-62, 68.

prince Hishām and pray that he may enjoy a reign of many years and overcome his enemies."¹

The Malkite Church at Damascus adjoined the palace in which Hishām resided. Hishām commanded that the Malkite Patriarch should build his house next to the prince's reception hall, because of his great love for him, so that Hishām could hear the Patriarch praying and reading. Hishām used to say to the Patriarch, "When thou beginnest to pray at night I receive great comfort, and I cease to trouble about the affairs of the empire, and then sleep comes to me restfully."²

Turning now from a discussion of what is known from the sources of the attitude of the Umayyad caliphs towards the Christians within the dār al-Islām, it is clear that in the particular geographical area under discussion in this thesis, the Christians in the Jazīra were subject to oppression and tyranny from individual governors. Thomas al-Marjī states that at a time of scarcity, Ishū'-yāb, the abbot of Bīth Abhe had been fined fifteen thousand dirhams by the greedy governor of Mosul who was encouraged by men who envied the abbot.³ Another governor, 'Umrān b. Muḥammad tried to own the land near the above-mentioned monastery by

1. Op. cit., pp. 73-74; cf. al-Maqrīzī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 493.

2. Ibn al-Muqaffa', op. cit., p. 74.

3. P. 173.

forcing the monks to sign a declaration of sale to him, but Qaryaqos the abbot refused to do so. When the governor noticed his firmness he gave up.¹

According to Tell-Mahrē, the Christians suffered greatly from the lawlessness of the Muslims. It was the military leaders who proved the greatest threat to the safety of the Christians of al-Ruhā. He cites the following anecdote, which may probably be ascribed to the end of the first century A.H./seventh century A.D. A large sum of money was entrusted by a Muslim officer about to depart on a campaign against the Byzantines, to the care of the doorkeeper of a monastery outside al-Ruhā. Three years later, the warrior returned to find the doorkeeper had died and that the whereabouts of the treasure was not known. The officer threatened to demolish the monastery if he did not receive satisfaction, and the governor of al-Ruhā insisted that the monastery should be sold and its occupants enslaved. The bishop of al-Ruhā, Ḥabīb, summoned up the spirit of the dead man, learned from him the place where the money had been deposited and restored it to its owner.² The background to this "miraculous" retrieval was no doubt much more mundane.

On other occasions there was a different sort of relationship between the Islamic governors and the

1. Al-Marjī, pp. 195-9.

2. Pp. 15-17.

Christians. According to the Christian sources, it was often possible that this relationship was a positive one. The Islamic sources, on the other hand, almost entirely neglect such positive aspects. The exception is Abu 'l-Faraj who mentions in his book al-Aghānī that many Christian poets enjoyed a good relationship with the governors. The otherwise general silence in the extant Muslim sources may also spring from the fact that for such writers, history was composed for the purpose of glorifying Islam. Such men were religious and since they believed that Islam replaced all other religions, they saw little point in emphasising favourable aspects of other faiths. When Muslim historians do occasionally mention a good relationship between the Islamic governors and the Christians, this is only done in order to lampoon the governors.¹

For the documentation on a positive relationship between the Islamic governors and the Christians, one must rely therefore principally on Christian sources. Michael states that Athanasius "a native of al-Ruhā was so well-known that 'Abd al-Malik made him a tutor to his little brother."² Al-Marjī states that the governor of the Jazīra, Umrān b. Muḥammad, asked

1. Ansāb, vol. 4, part 2, p. 2; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, p. 131; 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 222-232.

2. Vol. 2, pp. 448; cf. Chronography, p. 104.

Gabriel the abbot of Bīth 'Abhe to lend him wheat, which the abbot did.¹ Sabar-Ishū' b. Ramishū', the well-known Syriac scholar was employed by al-Ḥurr b. Yūsuf the governor of Mosul (108-114 A.H./726-732 A.D.) in the Dīwān al-Kharāj.²

Sometimes, a Christian could be the drinking companion of a Muslim governor. A'shā Banu Taghlib, the Christian poet, was the drinking companion of al-Ḥurr b. Yūsuf, the governor of Mosul. A'shā once became so drunk that he fell into a deep sleep.³

This good relationship was not without its problems. Some clergy tried to exploit their friendship with the governors to obtain what clerical ranks they wanted. They gave the governors bribes to force the Patriarch to

1. P. 304.

2. Barṣūm, op. cit., p. 313.

3. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 11, p. 281. Al-Ḥurr called his slave girls to come with him into his summer house. When A'shā woke up he tried to follow his friend, but the servants prevented him. He tried to enter by force but a servant hit him. When A'shā complained to his tribe, the Banu Taghlib, many of them came with him and avenged him by hitting al-Ḥurr himself. The above statement shows that the Banu Taghlib were so strong and in such a good position that they could take vengeance on the governor of Muslims.

ordain them.¹ Others tried to obtain important positions in the Church by deceit. For example, Qaryaqos who wanted to be bishop of Ṭūr-ʿAbidīn managed to use someone posing as an astrologer who had a book on astrology. Qaryaqos and this man wrote in the book that the signs said that Marwān II would be the caliph and so would his son be after him. Qaryaqos gave the book to Marwān. When his own astrologer read this, Marwān believed it and was very pleased with it. He was so pleased that he asked Qaryaqos what he wanted from him, to which Qaryaqos replied that he wanted to be Metropolitan of Ṭūr-ʿAbidīn, the Chair of which was vacant. Marwān wrote to the Patriarch, "Do not ordain a Metropolitan in Ṭūr-ʿAbidīn unless I order you."² Then Qaryaqos became the Metropolitan of Ṭūr-ʿAbidīn.³

In the same period there were religious disputes between two Monophysite groups, the Jacobites and the Maronites, in the presence of Marwān II when he was governor of the Jazīra. Marwān decided that the Jacobites were right, so the Maronites who were worsted in the dispute paid Marwān four thousand dinars.⁴ This account indicates that the Christians had enough confidence in this governor to ask him to act as arbitrator.

1. Michael, vol. 2, pp. 464-5, 488-9; Marī, p. 63; Bar-Hebraeus, vol. 3, pp. 136-138.

2. Michael, vol. 2, p. 467.

3. Ibid., pp. 469, 472-3.

4. Ibid., p. 467.

In general, it appears that there was great freedom of religious discussion in the period of the Umayyad caliphate. Famous Christians criticised Islam and were permitted to do so very freely. Al-Akḥṭal the Taghlibī poet, and St. John of Damascus, the chief adviser of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, were amongst those who criticised Islam. Al-Akḥṭal attacked those whom he described as becoming Muslims by pressure of hunger rather than by conviction. He further attacked those who made the circumambulation of the Ka'ba in the official Muslim pilgrimage, likening them to animals on a threshing floor.¹ To St. John of Damascus belongs the well-known treatise on the controversy between Christianity and Islam.² Though most of the sources on the subject of Muslim - Christian relations are

1. Pp. 315, 154.

2. Sahas, op. cit., pp. 51-159; John of Damascus, The Discussion of a Christian and a Saracen, ed. J.W. Voorhis in The Muslim World, (Hartford, 1935), vol. 25, pp. 266-273; J.W. Voorhis, "John of Damascus on the Moslem Heresy", in The Muslim World, (1934), vol. 24, pp. 391-398; D. O'Leary, How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs, (London, 1964), p. 139; R. Bell, The Origin of Islam, (London, 1926), pp. 207-210; J.W. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology, (London, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 66-67.

Christian, their information may be regarded as generally acceptable because these sources tend to tell both sides of the story, both negative and positive.

When severe policies were imposed by caliphs and governors, both Muslims and Christians suffered but it is probable that the Christians suffered more. What ill-treatment was suffered by the Christians of the Jazīra under the early Islamic caliphate was probably less than what they had suffered under the rule of Byzantium and Persia.¹

VII. The attitudes of the Christians of the Jazīra to the second Islamic civil war (64-73 A.H./682-692 A.D.)

It is interesting to note that the Nestorian Christians of Naṣībīn were involved in the second Islamic civil war. They supported the Umayyad caliph's attack on al-Mukhtār b. 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī who led a revolution in 66 A.H./685 A.D. in Kūfa against 'Abd al-Malik.

There is evidence from John Bar-Penkayē to support the theory that some Christians under the leadership of John the leper, bishop of Naṣībīn, joined in on the Umayyad side against al-Mukhtār in the second Islamic civil war. John was a candidate for the post of the Patriarch of the Nestorian Church which had lain vacant

1. Cf. chapter I of this thesis.

for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years since the death of John Bar-Marta¹ in 64 A.H./683 A.D. However, al-Mukhtār appointed Hanan-Ishū' to the post in 67 A.H./686 A.D. Ubayd² Allah b. Ziyād the Umayyad governor of Mesopotamia then promised to depose Hanan-Ishū' and to appoint John in his place as Patriarch for the Nestorians, if John would go with him to fight al-Mukhtār. This John did. The exact motives of 'Ubayd Allah in taking this action are unknown, but it may have been in order to keep the Christian population quiet during al-Mukhtār's revolution. John's partisans in Nasībin led by Mardan Shāh helped Muḥammad b. Marwān, the governor of the Jazīra, to take the city.³

Al-Mukhtār sent Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar with an army

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1. John Bar-Penkayē is wrong to write the name of George instead of John Bar-Marta. George died in 680 A.D. and John succeeded him in that same year. The latter died in 683 A.D. Cf. 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 154-173.
 2. John Bar-Penkayē mistakenly writes the name of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ziyād instead of Ubayd Allah b. Ziyād because the former was governor of Khurāsān. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, vol. 5, pp. 315, 316, 321.
 3. Op. cit., p. 184; cf. M. Morony, "Religious Communities in Late Sassanian and Early Muslim Iraq" in Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, (Leiden, 1974), vol. 17, pp. 127-129.

against 'Ubayd Allah the Umayyad governor of Mesopotamia in Mosul. Ibrāhīm's army defeated 'Ubayd Allah.¹ After this defeat John the leper fled to Damascus where he bribed the Umayyad princes and flattered 'Abd al-Malik in order to win the post of Patriarch.² In 67 A.H./ 687 A.D. al-Mukhtār and his followers were beginning to lose power. They were defeated in the battle at Kūfa by Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr.³ However, Hanan-Ishū' was deposed from his position as a Patriarch of the Nestorian Church:

"John the leper gave Bishr the governor of Iraq, the brother of 'Abd al-Malik, money, saying that Hanan-Ishū' had been the appointee of the ruler's opponents, al-Mukhtār and Muṣ'ab. Bishr forcibly got possession of the Patriarchal mitre, pallium and staff, drove Hanan-Ishū' away from the cities and got John the leper installed in 74 A.H./700 A.D."⁴

The participation of the Nestorian Church in the Islamic civil war is justified thus by Young:

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1. Dixon, op. cit., p. 65; Wellhausen, op. cit., p. 186.
 2. Ibn Mattī, p. 59.
 3. Muṣ'ab himself was defeated five years later by 'Abd al-Malik at the battle of Maskin in 72 A.H./ 691 A.D.
 4. Marī, p. 63.

"In such a ding-dong struggle for power, it was of course very difficult for a state official like the Patriarch to remain neutral ... and there was the risk of being on the losing side."¹

Bar-Hebraeus, a Jacobite historian, claimed that the reason for Hanan-Ishū's deposition was that he had insulted the Islamic religion:

"The Nestorian Catholicos Hanan-Ishū was asked one day by the caliph: What do you think of the Islamic religion? and he promptly replied: It is a kingdom founded by the sword, not a faith confirmed by divine miracles like the Christian faith and the Mosaic faith of old."²

This report is dubious as it presents Hanan-Ishū as being harsh and insensitive, which stands in sharp contrast to other reports of him as being learned, wise and experienced.³ This distortion is probably deliberate on the part of Bar-Hebraeus as the Jacobite and Nestorian Christians were ancient enemies.

1. Patriarch, Shah and Caliph, p. 103.

2. Vol. 3, p. 136.

3. Marī, p. 63; 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

CHAPTER V

THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN THE
JAZĪRA

I. Agriculture and Grazing

Both Muslim and Christian sources stress the fertility of the Jazīra. According to Muslim sources, it had favourable weather¹ with much rain and it possessed many rivers.² These two factors provided the area with ample sources of irrigation. The medieval geographers refer to the large number of wells in the area.³

The fertility of the land was well-known. The Quraysh in pre-Islamic times had heard about the fertility of the Jazīra, especially about its countryside.⁴ During the Islamic period it was described to 'Umar I as very fertile land.⁵ Ibn Ḥawqal says it was very fertile at the beginning of Islam, producing different crops.⁶

During the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra, the

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1. Al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 142; Ibn Ḥawqal, op. cit., p. 149; al-Iṣṭakhrī, op. cit., p. 52.
 2. Ibn Sarābiyūn, 'Ajā'ib al-Aqālīm al-Sab'a, (Vienna, 1929), p. 125; Ibn Rusta, op. cit., p. 90; al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 144; Ibn al-Faqīh, op. cit., p. 134; al-Tabrīzī, op. cit., p. 158.
 3. Al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 144; Chronography, p. 109; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 707, 742.
 4. Ibn al-Faqīh, op. cit., p. 135.
 5. Al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj, vol. 2, p. 37.
 6. Op. cit., pp. 190-191.

share of every Muslim conqueror in the Jazīra from the khums was more than ten thousand dirhams, apart from what he received in the form of cattle and slaves.¹ When 'Umar I received this information, he wrote to 'Iyād thanking Allah who enriched the Muslims after their poverty and sustained them.² The above information shows how the Jazīra was prosperous and rich before and during the Islamic conquest.

A similar picture is given by Christian sources. Dionysius the Tell-Mahrē (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.) the historian of the Jazīra, lauded its fertility and mentioned that its land was famous for its vineyards, farms and the wealth of its great herds. All the land was fertile, no space could be found without plants and it had been planted with vineyards. All the land in the Jazīra was famous for farmers and a wealth of animals; everybody in the Jazīra, even the poor, had

1. Ibn A'tham, p. 341.

2. Ibid. Unfortunately, as a result of the Islamic conquest of the Jazīra, Naṣībīn suffered from a famine; therefore Ishū'-yāb, the Nestorian bishop of Nineveh, sent 1,000 measures of barley to relieve the people of the city. Cf. Isho-yahbh III, The Book of Consolations, p. 11; Young, Patriarch, Shah and Caliph, p. 88.

a farm with donkeys, goats,¹ cattle and horses.²

Strapo mentions that the Jazīra produced barley, grapes, wines, vinegar and meal.³ Joshua the Stylite discusses the range of crops produced in the Jazīra, citing wheat, chickpeas, beans, lentils,⁴ grapes, vines⁵ and olives.⁶

The Christians of the Jazīra who formed the majority of the population in this area in the early Islamic period, occupied the fertile land of the Jazīra and were agriculturalists. According to Dionysius the Tell-Mahrē, the peasants of the Jazīra could be divided in three strata; the first were the rich peasants who owned land and exploited the other peasants when high taxes

1. P. 98.

2. Pp. 113, 137.

3. He was born in 63 A.D. His geographical work was translated by H.C. Hamilton, The Geography of Strapo, trans. H.C. Hamilton, (London, 1881), vol. 3, p. 151.

4. Op. cit., p. 29.

5. Ibid., p. 34.

6. Ibid., p. 63. It is interesting that Lambard mentions that cotton was introduced into Mesopotamia in the 7th century A.D. and that under the Muslims it grew in vast fields in the Jazīra in the region of al-Khābūr and Ḥarrān. He does not, however, mention any sources to substantiate this claim. Op. cit., p. 183. Cf. Ashtor, op. cit., p. 262.

were imposed on the land.¹ The second were the poor peasants who also owned the land but they were exploited by the rich peasants and the people of the towns, the merchants and the rich.² The third stratum were the landless peasants who were agricultural labourers who hired themselves out to those who needed their labour and who migrated to places where there was employment.³ Also in the area were Arab Christian tribes such as Rabī'a and Muḍar who occupied even the deserts of the Jazīra and kept horses, cattle and camels.⁴

Animal husbandry was not only conducted in the deserts, but there were also many different animals reared in the countryside. Christian farmers kept cattle,⁵ camels⁶ and pigs, and for a time at least

1. P. 137.

2. Pp. 92-93.

3. Pp. 112, 133. Cf. E. Ashtor, A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages, (London, 1976), p. 38.

4. Al-Akḥṭal, p. 308. Al-Iṣṭakhrī, op. cit., p. 54. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 12, pp. 135-137; al-Balādhurī, p. 182.

5. Al-Balādhurī, p. 182. Qudāma b. Ja'far, al-Kharāj wa Ṣan'at al-Kitāba (Ms. in the library of Baghdad University no. 13), p. 102.

6. Al-Iṣṭakhrī, op. cit., p. 54.

the Muslims agreed to keep the latter too.¹ However, 'Abd al-Malik (65-86 A.H./685-705 A.D.) ordered all pigs in the towns of the Jazīra and Syria to be slaughtered.²

According to al-Muqaddasī, the Jazīra was famous as the home of thoroughbred horses.³ In particular, the Banu Taghlib horses were amongst the best horses in the Jazīra. The Banu Taghlib preserved the family tree of their horses and desired to keep it pure. Because of that advantage they were expensive; such a horse might be worth twenty thousand dirhams.⁴

It is apparent therefore from the above discussion that the Jazīra was highly significant in the Islamic agricultural economy, because its agriculture was economically viable. At the time of the Islamic conquest, it was clearly a most valuable province for the Muslims to acquire and maintain.

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1. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 863.
 2. Unknown historian, The Chronicle of the Year 846, p. 581; Michael, vol. 2, p. 447.
 3. Op. cit., pp. 136, 145.
 4. Ibn al-Kalbī, Ansāb al-Khayl, ed. A. Zakī Bāshā, (Cairo, 1946), pp. 19, 42-49. Ibn Ādam, p. 50. Al-Jāhīz, al-Ḥayawān, vol. 2, p. 87.

II. Industry

Early Islamic and Christian sources mention that the Jazīra exported many manufactured products. Raw materials were to be found in Mosul, including crude iron and pitch. The city's inhabitants mined iron and manufactured many different objects from it. For example, they made buckets, knives and chains as well as arrows. Coal was also manufactured from wood. In Naṣībīn and Ḥarrān scales were made.¹

In Naṣībīn fruit was cut into strips and dried. Namaksod (salted meat) was made in Ma'alathāya. Dried milk was also produced. In Ḥarrān sweets were made whilst honey was produced in Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar. The best soap was made in al-Raqqā. In Āmid clothes were made of wool and flax whilst in Ma'alathāya hemp-ropes were produced.² Raisins were made in Sarūj,³ al-Ruhā, Āmid and Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar.⁴

The best wine was made in 'Āna, which was considered

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1. Al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 145. Cf. Strapò, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 151.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibn Ḥawqal, op. cit., p. 206.
 4. Joshua the Stylite, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

as the best medicine for the cold.¹ Wine was also produced in Tikrīt, Sa'rd and Mārdīn.² Vintage wine was produced in al-Ruhā, Āmid and other places in the Jazīra.³ It is well-known, of course, that all the monasteries produced very fine wine.⁴

III. Trade

The trade of the Christians of the Jazīra derived its importance from the favourable geographical position of the Jazīra amongst the Islamic countries. As regards trade routes in the Jazīra, international trade routes from east to west and from north to south passed through

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1. Al-Qazwīnī, Āthār al-Bilād, (Beirut, 1960), p. 418; al-Qurashī, Jamharat Ash'ār al-'Arab, ed. A. Muḥammad, (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 906; Ibn al-Faqīh, op. cit., p. 129; al-Marzubānī, al-Muwashshah, (Cairo, 1323 A.H.), p. 139.
 2. Al-Ṣāwī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 263; al-Akhṭal, p. 209, footnote h.
 3. Joshua the Stylite, op. cit., p. 31.
 4. Al-Shābushtī, op. cit., pp. 110, 112, 116-117, 127, 147; al-'Umarī, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 302, 310; 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 141-146.

the Jazīra in the period before Islam.¹ These trade routes went up and down the eastern bank of the Tigris and the western bank of the Euphrates.² These routes were further developed in the Islamic period because the Muslims managed to achieve a new unity in the Near and Middle East³ through which the trade routes were passing.

The Banu Taghlib controlled these trade routes in the Jazīra in the pre-Islamic period and they obtained a lot of money thereby.⁴ According to al-Akhṭal, the Banu Taghlib also controlled these trade routes in the Islamic period.⁵

The goods were shipped on the Euphrates and the

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1. For more detail cf. J.B. Segal, Edessa, (Oxford, 1970), pp. 137-138; Shedd, op. cit., pp. 158-159; A. Stein, "The Ancient Trade Route Past Hatra and its Roman Posts" ed. in JRAS (1941), pp. 299-315.
 2. Ibn Khurradādhbih, op. cit., pp. 93, 95-97; al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., pp. 135, 149, 150; Qudāma b. Ja'far, op. cit., p. 214.
 3. The Muslim fuqahā' mention the ease with which trade was conducted between the various provinces of the Islamic empire.
 4. Al-Tabrīzī, op. cit., pp. 124, 158; al-Akhṭal, op. cit., p. 134, 307; al-Jumahī, op. cit., p. 419. Al-Jāhiz, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 87.
 5. P. 307.

Tigris¹ or transported on animals. Christian merchants obtained so much money that they managed to buy the fertile lands in the Jazīra and lent money to the peasants at high interest.² The activities of these merchants "formed the spearhead of the economic expansion"³ in the period under discussion here.

IV. Taxes

According to Muslim jurists, in the early Islamic period the Christians, like the rest of the dhimmīs, were in the dar al-Islām, so they were subject to Islamic law.⁴ This meant that they were citizens within the Islamic umma. The basis of this citizenship was the agreement made by the dhimmīs with the Muslims. This agreement was rendered nul and void if the dhimmīs broke it. Generally speaking in such an agreement, the Christians were obliged to pay the caliphate the kharāj, jizya and 'ushr (tithe) and not to do anything against Islam.⁵

1. Ashtor, op. cit., p. 42.

2. Tell-Mahrē, pp. 77, 82, 90, 92, 98, 102.

3. Lombard, op. cit., p. 147.

4. Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 516; Alī, op. cit., p. 248.

5. Cf. chapter two.

In Islamic legal terminology kharāj means land tax, and jizya means poll-tax. It is generally believed that it was 'Umar I who imposed the kharāj and the jizya on all the lands of the caliphate.¹ The jizya was a smaller item than the kharāj.² The amount of jizya differed from one Islamic area to another. These differences were due to the fact that the conquerors took into account different local conditions. On the other hand, the unit of measurement for the kharāj was always the jarīb, a square of 60 cubits per side.³

As far as the particular case of the Jazīra is concerned, 'Iyād b. Ghanam imposed the kharāj in 18 A.H./639 A.D. on the Christians of the Jazīra because their land had been conquered by war.⁴ The amount of the kharāj depended on the value of the crop and the method of irrigation. As for the jizya, he levied it in the Jazīra on able-bodied Christian males in lieu of the

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1. Tritton, "Islam and the Protected Religions" ed. in JRAS (1928), p. 485; 'Alī, op. cit., pp. 201-207.
 2. Tritton, op. cit., p. 494.
 3. Ibid., p. 498. For the classification of lands in Islamic law, cf. A.N. Polika "Classification of Lands in Islamic Law" in The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, (Chicago, 1940), vol. 57, pp. 50-62.
 4. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 173-176; al-Wāqidī, vol. 2, pp. 98, 106; Qudāma, p. 89.

military service they would have been called upon to perform had they been Muslims. Women and children were exempted.¹ When any Christian people served in the Muslim army they were exempted from payment of the jizya and shared the booty with the Muslims.²

The Muslims borrowed their system of taxes directly from Persia and Byzantium³ who previously had shared jointly the rule of the Jazīra. In the Islamic period, the regions of the Jazīra once under Persian control the people used the dirham which had been Persian currency,⁴ whereas in the areas of the Jazīra previously ruled by Byzantium the dīnār was

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1. Abu Yūsuf, p. 23; al-Balādhurī, pp. 173-174.
 2. Al-Balādhurī, p. 159; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 165.
 3. A.S. Tritton, The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects, p. 222. D. Dennett, Al-Jizya wa'l Islam, Arabic trans. F.F. Jār Allah, (Beirut, 1960), p. 45; Browne, The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia, p. 44; Ashtor, op. cit., p. 39; EI¹ (art:- Kharāj), p. 902.
 4. Cf. J. Bacharach and A. Gordus, "The Purity of Sassanian Silver Coins", in The Journal of the American Oriental Society, (1972), vol. 92, pp. 280-283. About the Byzantium currency cf. R.S. Lopez, "The Dollar of the Middle Ages", in The Journal of Economic History, (New York, 1951), vol. 11, pp. 209-234.

used.¹ The Muslims assessed the taxes sometimes on the basis of the dīnār, sometimes on the basis of the dirham. The dīnār was reckoned at twelve dirhams in Mesopotamia.² These two different currencies have caused confusion for many scholars.³

According to the "original" peace treaties made by the Christians with the Muslims, the collection of taxes in the cities was entrusted to the leaders of these cities⁴ who treated the Christians harshly. Indeed the Synod of 57 A.H./676 A.D. ordered the Christian leaders to refrain from acting in this way.⁵ The area of the cities themselves did not become kharāj land and the legal title on the land remained in the hands of its former owners.⁶

As for the situation in the villages, the collection of taxes was entrusted to the chiefs of the villages who were Christians.⁷ Abū Yūsuf mentions that the Muslims

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1. A.A. al-Dūrī, al-Nuḍum al-Islāmiyya, (Baghdad, 1950), vol. 1, p. 138; cf. A. Kremer, The Orient Under the Caliphs, trans. S.K. Bukhsh, (Philadelphia, 1977), p. 68; Tritton, op. cit., p. 216.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Al-Dūrī, op. cit., loc. cit.
 4. Cf. chapter 2, pp. 62-69.
 5. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 145; Chabot, op. cit., pp. 489-90; Ashtor, op. cit., p. 39.
 6. Cf. chapter 2, pp. 62-69.
 7. Tell-Mahrē, p. 92.

treated the villagers in the Jazīra exactly as the towns people except that the former had also to supply rations to the Muslims because they owned the lands and farms.¹

Al-Balādhurī makes the same point:

"For some time, oil, vinegar and food were taken for the benefit of Muslims in the Jazīra."²

This burden was reduced probably in 20 A.H./640 A.D.

"through the sympathy of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and fixed at 48, 24, 12 dirhams. In addition to the jizya, everyone had to provide two muddii of wheat, two qists³ of oil and two qists of vinegar."⁴

Another account included by al-Balādhurī and mentioned by other early sources, gives the additional information that 'Umar I "wrote to the tax-collectors instructing them to levy the jizya only on those who were adults and he fixed it at four dīnārs on those who possessed gold. He also assessed on them a subsistence tax by which each Muslim in Syria and the Jazīra would receive ... three qists of oil and the right to be entertained

1. P. 23.

2. P. 178

3. The qist is a certain quantity of oil or vinegar or honey. It was equivalent to about 468 grams. Cf. M. Riḍā, Mu'jam Matn al-Lughā, (Beirut, 1960), vol. 4, p. 563.

4. P. 178.

as a guest for three days."¹

In 20 A.H./640 A.D. 'Umar I divided the dhimmis into three categories: the first comprised the aristocracy and those who owned gold, the second (the middle class) consisted of small merchants and craftsmen whilst the third was made up of the peasantry and labourers.²

According to al-Balādhurī, the jizya was imposed on some monasteries in Mosul in 20 A.H./640 A.D. when they made peace treaties with 'Utba b. Farqad, the conqueror of Mosul.³

Islamic sources point out that the duty of entertaining Muslims is a communal matter, not a private one, as is suggested by most references to this duty. It is to be noted that the Byzantine Empire imposed on their states the duty of offering travelling

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1. Ibid., p. 152; cf. p. 125; cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', p. 209, 214; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 37; Abū Yūsuf, pp. 20-21, 69-70.

Ibn 'Asākir adds that 'Umar also wrote:

"Make it easy for him who cannot pay the jizya; help him who is weak."

Tārīkh Dimashq, vol. 1, p. 572.

2. Cf. al-Balādhurī, pp. 178, 271; Abū Yūsuf, pp. 20-21, 69; Qudāma, p. 90; Ibn Ādam, p. 9.
3. P. 331.

officials free hospitality,¹ so the Muslims might have borrowed it from them.

Coming now to the Umayyad period, it would appear that Mu'āwīya b. Abī Sufyān put the nobility of the non-Muslim inhabitants of Dīyār Muḍar in the middle category, and levied on each of them only 24 dirhams instead of 48 dirhams. He valued their dues for honey and olive oil in money amounting at that time to nine dirhams. These were added to the jizya making a total of thirty-three dirhams.² It may well be that this tax concession was granted to the nobility of Dīyār Muḍar for political reasons, either out of a desire to conciliate important people in a sensitive area or because Mu'āwīya wanted to reward them for support they had given him at Ṣiffīn.³ By the reign of 'Abd al-Malik it would appear that the jizya levied in the Jazīra was mild in comparison with other areas.⁴

1. Tritton, op. cit., p. 222.

2. Qudāma, p. 90.

3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, op. cit., pp. 15-16 (1st ed.).

4. Although al-Sawād was conquered peacefully (ṣulḥan ضلحاً), the dhimmīs paid the following rate of the jizya: 12, 24, 48 dirhams according to the wealth of the taxpayer.¹ In addition to the jizya there was in the Sawād another sort of tax called al-Khirza (الخرز) under which every dhimmī paid 4 dirhams.² The Muslims borrowed /

Footnote 4 continued.

/borrowed this Khirza from the Persians who in the pre-Islamic period imposed it on those who were not enrolled in the Persian army.³ The dhimmīs in al-Sawād had to also play host to soldiers for three days and supply 15 ṣā'⁴ (صاع) of wheat monthly and a certain quantity of fat not precisely known.⁵

In Egypt the jizya was two dīnārs on every adult, in addition to which every landowner had to pay three irdabbs⁶ of wheat, two qists of honey, two qists of oil and two qists of vinegar. Moreover, the dhimmīs provided every Muslim with a woollen upper gown, breeches and upper cloak or turban and a pair of shoes.⁷ This jizya was too heavy for many of the dhimmīs: it was this which probably made 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. between 91-99 A.H./709-717 A.D.) say, "The inhabitants of Miṣr were charged more than they could afford."⁸

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1. Al-Balādhurī, p. 269, 271, 279; Abū Yūsuf, pp. 20-21.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 367.
 3. M.H. al-Ḥaydarābādī, Majmū'at al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiyya, Lil'ahd al-Nabawwī wa'l Khilāfa al-Rāshida, (Cairo, 1956), p. 422.
 4. The ṣā' was a certain measure of capacity for grain to the value of 4 muddi. Cf. EI¹, (art:- ṣā').
 5. Al-Zarqānī, Sharḥ al-Zarqānī 'alā Muwaṭṭā' Malik b. Anas, (Cairo, 1936), vol. 2, p. 140.
 6. The irdabb was a certain measure of capacity in Egypt. It is equivalent to about 197.7 litres. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 569.
 7. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 214-215.
 8. Ibid., p. 217.

Turning now to the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē relates that in 73 A.H./692 A.D. 'Abd al-Malik "issued a strong edict ordering each man to go to his original village, to inscribe and register his name as well as his vineyards, olives, trees, goods, children and all that he possessed. Such was the origin of the capitulation tribute (*ضريبة الرأس*) and of all the evils that afflicted the Christians. Up until then, the kings had taken tribute from the land, but not from men. Since then, the Children of Hagar began to impose Egyptian servitude on the Aramaeans. This was the first census made by the Arabs."¹

According to Islamic sources, this census was not the first census made in caliphal times, since 'Umar I under pressure to distribute al-Sawād amongst the Muslims ordered a census.² Corroboration for this is also suggested by Theophanes in the following account:

1. P. 10.

2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 21; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 83; al-Balādhurī, pp. 266, 271; Ibn Ādam, p. 27. More evidence of a census having been carried out before that of 'Abd al-Malik is perhaps suggested by Ibn Rusta (op. cit., p. 105) and Ibn Khurradādhbih (op. cit., p. 14) who mention that "the number of dhimmīs who paid the jizya to the Muslims in the reign of 'Umar I in al-Sawād were 500,000 persons or 550,000 persons as al-Balādhurī relates.

"'Umar I ordered all the territories and land subdued by him to be measured and described not only according to men but also a census of fruit trees and plants."¹

This evidence casts doubt on the assertion made by Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē that this was the first census made by the Arabs.

Abū Yūsuf discusses taxation in the reign of 'Abd al-Malik. He writes as follows:

"'Abd al-Malik sent al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Ash'arī to the Jazīra. He judged the tax to be insufficient and took a census. He then calculated the annual income, deducted from that what had to be spent on food and clothing, took into account holidays and festivals and thus having decided what a man should pay for the necessities of life, he determined that each man could and should pay: a jizya of four dīnārs."

Abū Yūsuf continues that:

"On every hundred jarībs of land within less than one day's journey from the city, he imposed a tax of one dīnar, but for land more than a day's journey the owner paid half this, and this was also done in Syria and Mosul."²

1. Op. cit., p. 522 (A.M. 6131). Bar Hebraeus relates that the Muslims made the population census in 18 A.H./639 A.D. (Chronography, p. 96).

2. Pp. 23-24.

Al-Daḥḥāk probably added this extra amount because of the fertility of the Jazīra and the high income of its Christian inhabitants. This account by Abū Yūsuf suggests that the villagers began paying extra tax on their land in monetary form instead of the additional payment in kind which had probably been their custom until then.

Poliak comments thus on the second account of Abū Yūsuf mentioned above:

"But in the villages, probably owing to the difficulty of census, not men were charged with this tribute but lands which were bringing the corresponding income."¹

The preceding discussion so far suggests that the Muslims valued the jizya at one dīnār per annum on every man, at the beginning of the conquest of the Jazīra. In addition to the dīnār, it was a requirement to pay two muddii of wheat, two qists of vinegar and two qists of oil.² Then, at the cessation of the conquest, the Muslims changed this tax system, so the people of the cities began paying only the jizya³ whereas the villagers paid the jizya in addition to payment in kind.⁴ In 'Abd al-Malik's reign the tax system was again changed.

1. Op. cit., p. 60.

2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 23; al-Balādhurī, p. 174.

3. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 174, 177, 178.

4. Ibid., p. 152; Abū Yūsuf, p. 23.

According to the early fugahā', the Muslims had the right to change the taxation system in the countryside of the Jazīra, because they conquered it by force. Thus they could declare the land to be fay' (فَيْء) which was for the benefit of all Muslims. Kharāj was imposed on it, but the caliph had the right to demand amounts of kharāj it could afford to pay. The caliph could, for example, increase the amount of the kharāj, subject to the production of the land and the ability of the tax payers to pay,¹ as for example 'Abd al-Malik who exercised his prerogative in this respect.²

Cahen who praises the policy of 'Abd al-Malik, stresses the radical alteration which 'Abd al-Malik began when he combined the different lands into one by calculating the average of the land production, taking into consideration the fertility of that land.³

Later on in the Umayyad period, according to the Syriac Chronicle of the Year 846 A.D., two population censuses were made in the Jazīra during the period 91-

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1. Abū Yūsuf, p. 48; Ibn Ādam, p. 56; Qudāma, p. 81; al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', p. 219; al-Farrā', Abū Ya'lā, al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭaniyya, ed. A.H. al-Fiqqī, (Cairo, 1357), pp. 149-151.
 2. Cf. pp. 232-234 above.
 3. "Fiscalité, propriété, Antagonismes sociaux en Haute-Mesopotamie" in Arabica, (Leiden, 1954), vol. 1, p. 137.

93 A.H./709-711 A.D. in the reign of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (86-96 A.H./705-715 A.D.). The first of these two was executed in 91 A.H./709 A.D., according to the following edict:

"Every man should be registered and should come to his country and to his father's house."¹

This indicates that there had probably been a flight from the land because of the oppressive policies of tax collectors. The caliphate, afraid of the loss of revenue involved in such a flight, therefore ordered the fugitives to go back to their villages. As will be observed later, such flight on the part of the peasants was a major phenomenon of agrarian life in the Jazīra.

A second population census of the Jazīra in this period was carried out two years later, in 93 A.H./711 A.D. The same source relates:

"Maslama² sent amirs all over the Jazīra; they measured lands, counted vines, plants, men and cattle and they hung seals of lead on every man's neck."³

As for the seals, they were only used at the time

1. P. 582.

2. Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik was the governor of the Jazīra.

3. P. 582.

of collection of the jizya¹ to "signify that the poll-tax (jizya) had been collected from them."² It should be noted that the Muslims did not invent this custom, for it was known to Byzantium; according to Joshua the Stylite, the governor of Edessa went in 500 A.D. to the Byzantine emperor and informed him of the great famine at Edessa. The emperor gave him a sum of money to help the poor. The governor "sealed many of them on their necks with leaden seals and gave each of them a pound of bread a day."³

Such measures indicate that peasants had run away from the villages in an attempt to evade the taxes. Village life was in turmoil. In such a situation as this it is understandable that the caliph would take steps to compel the peasants to go back to their villages, in the hope of restoring stability, collecting taxes, and putting the land under cultivation. By using lead seals on their necks, dhimmīs were prevented from attempting to escape.⁴

In the reign of 'Umar II many economic reforms were introduced. The caliph exempted the Christians of

1. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 21-22, 73.

2. D. Dennett, Marwān Ibn Muḥammad, (Harvard, 1939), p. 23.

3. Op. cit., p. 31.

4. F. Lokkegaard, Islamic Taxation in the Classic Period, (Philadelphia, 1978), p. 140.

Mosul from the tax system that 'Abd al-Malik had established. He ordered the governor of Mosul to change the jizya of Mosul to 48, 24 and 12 dirhams a year.¹ 'Umar II also ordered the tax collector of the Jazīra, Maymūn b. Mihrān, to collect "goodness" (الطيب) from the Christians and that there should not accrue to the Muslims from the Christians any tax but the lawful one.²

According to Ibn al-Muqaffa', 'Umar II freed the immovable property of the churches and the bishops from the kharāj.³ He goes on to say that in the reign of Hishām, the kharāj was doubled.⁴ 'Umar II also ordered monks to be taxed and they were. Jizya was exacted from each monk at the rate of two dīnārs. According to Abū 'Ubayd, the Christians had borne the burden of the jizya of their monks, who in any case could bear such a burden themselves because they had become so wealthy.⁵

'Umar II ordered "to leave those on the Euphrates who pay the kharāj enough to let them have gold seals,

1. Al-Azdī, Tārikh al-Mawṣil, ed. A. Ḥabība, (Cairo, 1967), p.1.

2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 65; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 380; Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Sa'īd, op. cit., p. 32.

3. Op. cit., pp. 71-72.

4. Ibid., p. 75.

5. P. 58.

to wear the ṭaylasān and to ride on packhorses (البراذين). Take what is left over."¹ Tritton comments on this by saying: "This gives a less favourable view of his rule."² 'Umar II also ordered that the jizya should be removed from those who had become Muslims.³ He also abolished al-kusūr (الكسور). This was a payment which had arisen in the following manner. In the very early days of Islam until the beginning of the Umayyad period, in paying their taxes the people had preferred to pay the government in number rather than weight, neglecting the difference in the weight of the two currencies in use. It was not long before they saw the advantages of paying taxes with the lighter currency and keeping the heavy currency for themselves. Ziyād b. Abīhi, the Umayyad governor of Iraq (45-55 A.H./665-674 A.D.), was apparently the first Umayyad governor who insisted on

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1. Ibn Qutayba, 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, (Cairo, 1930), vol. 1, p. 53.
 2. Op. cit., p. 209.
 3. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 569; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 64; Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 283. H.A.R. Gibb comments as follows:

"There is no clear rulling that converted dhimmīs shall be exempted from paying the jizya."

See "The Fiscal Rescript of 'Umar II", in Arabica (Leiden, 1955), vol. 2, p. 15.

the payment of al-kusūr and on the payment of only heavy dirhams. The kusūr was the total amount of money which was needed to make up the difference between the two currencies. Later, al-Ḥajjāj also imposed the payment of al-kusūr.¹ It is interesting to note the following account of al-Māwardī on this subject:

"The people of al-kharāj paid al-Ṭabariyya² whose weight was four dānaqs³ and kept al-wāfī whose weight was eight dānaqs. The governors of the Banu Umayya wronged the people in collecting al-kusūr, but 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz ordered that they could pay in the light currency."⁴

'Umar II prohibited all the duties over and above tribute duties; these included presents at the Nowrūz festival and the Muhrajān festival which were paid as

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1. Al-Māwardī, al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyya, (Cairo, 1960), p. 81; al-'Askarī, al-Awā'il, ed. M. al-Wakīl (Ṭanja, n.d.), p. 238.
 2. Among the dirhams that were minted in Ṭabaristān, cf. al-Maqrīzī, Kitāb al-Nuqūd, ed. A.M. al-Karmalī, (Cairo, 1939), p. 24.
 3. Each dānaq was equivalent to 1/6 dirham, and one mitqal was equivalent to eight dānaqs. Cf. Abū 'Ubayd, pp. 701-702.
 4. Op. cit., p. 81; al-'Askarī, al-Awā'il, p. 238.

fees for subordinate officials, prostitution fees,¹ the price of stationery and messengers and the rent on houses.²

‘Umar II wrote to his governors asking them not to let the productive lands carry the burden of the desolate lands, nor the desolate lands bear the burden of the productive lands.³ He enjoined the governors to let the peasants cultivate their lands,⁴ and not to assess the crops before they became ripe,⁵ to stop the people of the cities having to play host to soldiers for three days,⁶ to make the dhimmīs plant their lands and not neglect it; "not to let any tool of the dhimmīs be sold."⁷ Abū ‘Ubayd comments on the last sentence by saying:

"‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Azīz did that because if tools were sold, the dhimmī would not plant and he would not pay the kharāj."⁸

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 569; Abū Yūsuf, p. 49; Abū ‘Ubayd, pp. 64-66; Ibn Sa‘d, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 374; Ibn al-Jawzī, Sīrat ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, p. 160.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 569; Unknown historian, Tārīkh al-Khulafā’, (Moscow, 1967), p. 363.
 3. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 569; Abū ‘Ubayd, p. 65; Abū Yūsuf, p. 49.
 4. Abū ‘Ubayd, p. 64.
 5. Ibn Sa‘d, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 392.
 6. Ibid., vol. 5, p. 350.
 7. Abū ‘Ubayd, p. 136.
 8. Ibid.

In 100 A.H./719 A.D., 'Umar II announced that every purchase of land concluded by a Muslim after the year 100 A.H./719 A.D. was null and void.¹ The caliph acted thus because if the possessors of the kharāj land sold their land they would be selling the fay' of Muslims which could be a permanent source of income to the treasury.² Whilst a Muslim holding such land had only to pay the 'ushr,³ the dhimmī had to pay the kharāj which was about 40-50% of his crops.⁴

The following two caliphs, Yazīd II (101-105 A.H./720-724 A.D.) and Hishām (105-125 A.H./724-743 A.D.) followed the orders of 'Umar II.⁵ After that, however, the old practice returned and the lands were again sold to the Muslims.

'Umar II did not burden the dhimmīs with very heavy taxation. According to one account, somebody asked him "Why are prices higher than in the time of your predecessors?" He replied, "My predecessors used to charge the dhimmīs with more taxes than they could bear, forcing them thereby to sell their crops at low

1. Ibn 'Asākir, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 592.

2. Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., / vol. 5, p. 376; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 136; Abū Yūsuf, pp. 13-15.

3. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 35-36, 39; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 376.

4. A.A. al-Dūrī, Muqaddima fi'l-Tārīkh al-Iqtisādī al-'Arabī (Beirut, 1969), p. 26; Lokkegaard, op. cit., p. 72.

5. Ibn 'Asākir, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 596.

prices to pay the taxes. However, I am not charging anyone with more than he can bear and no one is pressed to sell his crops at a cheap price."¹

All the above-mentioned reforms of 'Umar II may explain why The Syriac Chronicle of the Year 846 says that 'Umar II was "... a merciful king beyond all the kings that were before him."²

According to al-Jāḥiẓ, some of the governors of 'Umar II ignored most of the above-mentioned orders.³

Gibb, commenting on the orders of 'Umar II, writes:

"The crisis in the fortune of the Arab state and of the dynasty which coincided with his succession, and which may have been the reason for his nomination by Sulaymān, called for urgent measures of reform. Under the influence of the developing religious thought, he attempted to meet this demand by reversing the policy of putting the state and its interests first, which had been initiated by his predecessors..."⁴

After the death of 'Umar II the Christians suffered

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1. Abū Yūsuf, p. 76; Abū Dā'ūd, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 370.
 2. P. 583. Theophanes and Michael give a very different account of 'Umar II. Cf. chapters 4 and 6 of this thesis.
 3. Al-Bayān wa'l-Tabiyīn, ed. A.A. Hārūn, (Cairo, 1949), vol. 3, pp. 358-359.
 4. Op. cit., p. 1.

from governors who forced them to work as slaves, labourers, to dig the canals and rivers and to build forts.¹ Yazīd II wrote to the governors of 'Umar II asking them to ignore 'Umar's orders and collect more money from the Christians whether rich or poor, well-off or hungry, healthy or dying.² Yazid II also "restored the taxes of which 'Umar II had relieved the churches and bishops for one year and required a great sum of money from the people."³

During the former's reign, there was a census of the people of the Jazīra. According to The Syriac Chronicle of the Year 846 A.D., this census took place in 104 A.H./722 A.D.:

"The Amir of the Jazīra sent registrars through the whole of his province; and they registered all persons, children and adults, even him that was born that day; and they measured lands and counted plants and made an inquisition the like of which was never known: and everyone in whom they found any false statement they shaved: and they shaved many persons."⁴

This census is the fourth census⁵ in the Jazīra conducted

1. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, p. 269.

2. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 205.

3. Ibn al-Muqaffa', op. cit., p. 72.

4. Op. cit., p. 584.

5. Cf. pp. 232, 235-236 above for the three censuses before this.

as were the others for economic motives. This suggests that the peasants were weighed down by increasing taxes which had caused the flight of the peasants from the villages in an attempt to evade the taxes.

This worsening economic situation of the Christians after the death of 'Umar II is hinted at by Yazīd III (126 A.H./744 A.D.) who is recorded as saying that he would never "burden the non-Muslim proprietors so much as to make them leave home in despair and not to make them put stone on stone or brick on brick or construct canals."¹

In the last few years of the Umayyad period, the caliphate became ever weaker. This situation affected the tax collectors who used the opportunity to exploit their offices to enrich themselves; Dionysius Tell-Mahrē relates that the tax collectors loaded onto the peasants more tax than they could bear, forcing them to sell their crops and animals at low prices to merchants in order to obtain the necessary money to pay their taxes. The merchants probably made agreements with the tax collectors to pay them half of the market price.² In other villages the tax collectors made agreements with the chiefs of the villages to help each other in order to obtain more money unjustly from the peasants for themselves.³

1. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, p. 269.

2. Pp. 113, 130, 133, 134.

3. Tell-Mahrē, p. 137.

Some peasants had to borrow money from the people of the towns at high interest in order to pay the amount required.¹ This bad situation caused flight from the land. This flight was a major phenomenon of agrarian life of the Jazīra in the 2nd century A.H./8th century A.D. The peasants fled from the villages looking for a secure refuge. But searches were made; and the governors announced that anybody who tried to hide any peasant would be punished severely and those who helped the governors to seize any peasants would be rewarded.²

The chiefs of the villages who were friends of the tax collectors helped them to seize the fleeing peasants. There were officials who marked the peasants with seals around their necks indicating their villages.³ Thus, the peasants were obliged to remain in their villages, growing poorer and poorer and more than ever the victims of the exploitation of the rich.⁴ Many of them, according to Tell-Mahrē, were willing to die for their liberty.⁵

1. Ibid., pp. 92-93, 134.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

3. Ibid., pp. 104-105, 109, 112, 127, 134, 137.

4. Ibid., p. 92.

5. Ibid., p. 93. Without mentioning when and where, Solomon al-Baṣrī relates some information concerning the bad economic situation of the Christians. He writes that the Muslims charged the Christians with more taxes than they could bear, forcing them to /

This bad situation continued till the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd.¹ According to the Islamic sources this bad situation was similar to that of the Sawād in the reign of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf.²

In spite of all that has been mentioned, the Jazīra remained a very fertile land and its tax revenue remained at 100,000 dīnārs a year. From the beginning of Islam till the fourth century A.H.³/10th century A.D. it was a granary for the surrounding countries and was a region which supplied al-Sawād with great quantities of wheat, which had been grown since ancient times.⁴

The 'ushr on trade

The Christians of the Jazīra, like other dhimmīs, were obliged to pay tax for their trade. This trade tax

/to sell their brass and iron, to give their sons and daughters willingly to the tax collectors. The Muslims also demanded the tax from the dead, orphans, widows and poor. (Op. cit., pp. 125-126)

1. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 28-29.
2. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 381; al-Jāḥiẓ, Risāla fī Banī Umayya, ed. M. 'Arnūs (Cairo, 1937), p. 98; al-'Askarī, op. cit., p. 136.
3. Ibn Ḥawqal, op. cit., p. 191.
4. Al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 145.

could be called either 'ushr or maks.¹ The term maks² denoted a specific trade tax, whereas the term 'ushr, although of course it was used in a broader sense to cover other kinds of taxation, was also used in commercial contexts in a way synonymous with maks.³

1. Al-Farrā', op. cit., p. 230, no. 1; P.G. Forand, "Notes on 'Ushr and Maks" in Arabica, (Leiden, 1966), vol. XIII, pp. 139-140.
2. Al-Maks was "money that used to be taken from the seller of the commodities in the markets in the time of Al-Jāhiliyya" or what is taken by al-'Ashshār (العشّار) who was called Ṣāhib al-Maks (صاحب المكس). Jābir b. Jinnī al-Taghlibī explained in the following

verse the meaning of maks:

أَفِي كُلِّ أَصْدَقِ الْعَاقِبِ إِتَاوَةٌ وَمِنْ كُلِّ مَبَايِعِ أَمْرٍ مَكْسٌ دِرْهَمٌ

"Is there bribing in everyone in the markets
of al-Irāq

And in the case of everything that a man
has sold the deducting of a dirham?

Lane, op. cit., book I, part 7, p. 2728; al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 249 (art:- Makasa); Ibn Manẓūr, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 105 (art:- Makasa). Cf. EI¹ (art:- Maks), J. 'Alī, al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabla al-Islām, (Beirut, 1968-73), vol. 7, p. 474.

3. The 'ushr was imposed on: 1) Muslims who owned 'ushriyya land. 2) Muslim merchants and artisans. 3) dhimmis, merchants and artisans. 4) ḥarbī /

The person who collected this tax was called al-‘āshir and the act of collecting al-‘āshir was termed al-ta‘shīr. Such an official lived on the frontier or on trade routes outside the cities.¹

According to Abū Yūsuf the ‘āshir of the Jazīra used to throw a rope or erect another kind of barrier over the rivers Euphrates and Tigris and collect the ‘ushr from those arriving by ship.² The sources do not mention, however, the exact location of the places where this activity took place in the Jazīra.

‘Umar I was the first caliph who ordered that the traders should pay the ‘ushr, trade tax,³ but the tax was not of his own invention. In the pre-Islamic period, the Christians in the Near East paid the ‘ushr (a trade tax) to their political overlords, whether Byzantine or

/ḥarbī merchants. Cf. Forand, op. cit., pp. 137-140.

According to Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, the ‘ushr was "levies upon property conveyed in commerce by the Muslims, dhimmis and ḥarbīs." Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 51.

1. Al-Sarakhsī, Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr, (Hyderabad, 1336), vol. 4, p. 282; al-Qalqashandī, Subḥ al-A‘shā, (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 357.
2. P. 79.
3. Abū Yūsuf, p. 77; Abū ‘Ubayd, p. 713; Ibn Ādam, p. 47.

Sassanian.¹ Liking the idea, 'Umar I decided to adopt it in his own government.² 'Umar himself had paid such a tax in the pre-Islamic period to Zinbāgh b. Rawḥ who was a collector of trade tax for the Ghassānids.³ According to Ibn Ḥajar, 'Umar I was a merchant before Islam. On one occasion when he passed Zinbāgh b. Rawḥ, 'Umar I had hidden his gold from this tax collector, but the latter discovered the gold so he treated 'Umar harshly. Later on, 'Umar I said, "When I find Zinbāgh b. Rawḥ in a city I will take one half of his goods and he will feel very sorry."⁴

However, in the Islamic period, 'Umar I appointed his own collectors of trade tax and told them to impose the following rates on the goods of the ahl al-dhimma: half the 'ushr i.e. 5 per cent, and on those of the ahl al-ḥarb, a full 'ushr, i.e. 10 per cent. Such a tax was to be imposed only on goods valued at 200 dirhams

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1. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 713; Ibn Manẓūr, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 246 (art:- 'Ashara); Ibn Khurradādhbih, op. cit., p. 128; 'Alī, op. cit., vol. 7, pp. 477-480.
 2. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 713. Cf. Qudāma, p. 97.
 3. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 461 (art:- Qar'a (قَرْعَ)); Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba, (Cairo, 1939), vol. 1, p. 533 (no. 2817).
 4. Ibid.; al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 461 (art:- Qar'a).

or more.¹ 'Umar I further ordered that the trade tax should be levied only once a year on the same goods.² If a merchant returned a second time to a trading post with additional goods he should be charged only the tax on the latter.³

Ziyād b. Ḥudayr relates, "I was the first to be sent by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to collect the 'ushr" from the Jazīra and was ordered not to search anyone but to collect one dirham out of forty, i.e. $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent from Muslim merchants, one out of 20 from dhimmīs, i.e. 5 per cent and the 'ushr, 10 per cent from those who were not dhimmīs.⁴

Nothing was paid for goods which were not intended for trading, such as camels, cows, sheep and horses, and the tax collector should accept the statement of the owner about it.⁵ And if the taxed person says that the goods are not his, his oath should be believed and he should pay nothing.⁶

The Christian merchants paid nothing if they traded inside their cities in which they had made peace treaties

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1. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 78-80; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 713; Ibn Ādam, p. 126; Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 518.
 2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 79; Ibn Ādam, p. 126; Qudāma, p. 97.
 3. 'Alī, Naṣārā al-'Irāq, p. 331.
 4. Abū Yūsuf, p. 78; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 711.
 5. Abū Yūsuf, p. 77; Ibn Ādam, p. 50.
 6. Ibn Qudāma, p. 97.

with the Muslims.¹ They also paid nothing if they traded in the Islamic cities unless they sold their goods; in which case they paid the 'ushr'. They did not pay anything if they wanted to go home with their goods or to take them to another country.²

The exemption from the 'ushr' of the Christian merchants, who traded in their own towns and the compulsion of those who traded in the Islamic towns to pay it was because of "collection by protection"³ (الجباية بالحماية). This meant that the merchants who wanted to transport their goods from one place to another in the Islamic countries could obtain the benefit of Islamic facilities such as law and order which protected him and his goods, and they could use such amenities as routes, bridges and canals.⁴

Opinions differ in the books of fiqh about trade taxes on wine and pigs. Certain fuqahā' stipulate that Muslims should not take 'ushr' from wine⁵ whilst others

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1. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 280; al-Zayla'ī, Tabiyyīn al-Ḥaqā'iq, (Cairo, 1313 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 282; al-Kāsānī, Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i', (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 37.
 2. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 280.
 3. Al-Zayla'ī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 282; al-Kāsānī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 37.
 4. Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 522.
 5. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 72; Ibn al-Qayyim, vol. 1, p. 164.

relate that the 'ushr was collected from the trade of wine¹ and pigs.² The same sources also differ about the amount of trade tax on wine and pigs. Abu Yūsuf writes, "A half of the 'ushr should be collected on the value of wine belonging to a dhimmī merchant."³ Ibn Ādam writes, "Double tax will be collected from them on wine." He further writes, "On wine ten per cent"⁴ and adds "The tax collector has to assess wine and pigs. If they are for trade he should collect ten per cent of their value."⁵ The point of view of Ibn Ādam is also expressed by other fuqahā' who cite an anecdote about 'Umar I who gave orders that ten per cent tax should be levied on the trade of wine.⁶

'Umar II abolished the 'ushr imposed on the trade of wine and pigs,⁷ and prohibited the transportation of wine from one region (rustāq) to another.⁸ In order

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1. Abū Yūsuf, pp. 77-79; Ibn Ādam, p. 50; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 70.
 2. Ibn Ādam, p. 50; al-Kāsānī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 38.
 3. P. 79.
 4. P. 49.
 5. P. 50.
 6. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 70; Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 276; al-Kāsānī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 38.
 7. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 72; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 380.
 8. Abū 'Ubayd, p. 149; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 365; Ibn al-Qayyim, vol. 2, p. 729.

to prevent illegal reassessments or over-assessment, 'Umar II ordered that traders should be given written receipts (barā'a) when they paid the 'ushr as proof of payment for the year.¹

In the last few years of the Umayyad period and at the beginning of the 'Abbāsīd period the merchants, both Muslim and Christian, suffered a lot from the trade collectors, so they complained against them. These tax collectors treated the merchants badly and used bad procedures in the collection of the trade tax. In particular, the trade tax collectors charged the merchants more than the legal rate of trade tax which was 5 per cent; according to Tell-Mahrē, they obliged them to pay 10 per cent.²

1. Abū Yūsuf, p. 79; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 718; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 4, p. 193 and vol. 7, p. 228.

2. Pp. 103-104; Cahen, op. cit., p. 140.

CHAPTER VI

THE POSITION OF THE CHRISTIANS IN EARLY ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Though no general social history of the Christians in the early Islamic period has been ever written, facts on this very interesting subject may be gathered and analysed from scattered sources. As well as the straightforward historical sources, both Muslim and Christian, work of fiqh are very informative about the relationship between the Muslims and dhimmīs and they deal with a wide range of problems in this area. Though it is certain that the rulings of the fuqahā' and Christian churchmen were not always respected, they are indicative of certain attitudes and trends. The oriental synod which was held in 56 A.H./676 A.D. is also a rich source of information about the social life of the Christians in the first century A.H./the second half of the seventh century A.D.

According to Islamic law, inter-marriage between Muslim women and dhimmī men was forbidden. There is a saying attributed to 'Umar which declares, "It is prohibited for Christian men to marry Muslim women." Moreover, 'Alī is reported to have said, "Christian or Jewish men must not marry Muslim women."¹ The opinions of the fuqahā' who lived in the first century A.H. were similar to 'Umar's orders. Such fuqahā' included Zayd b. 'Alī² and Malik b. Anas.³ This prohibition came about

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1. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 298, 301, 308;
cf. al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 5, p. 5.
 2. Musnad al-Imām Zayd, (Beirut, 1966), p. 310.
 3. Al-Mudawwana, vol. 2, p. 306.

because a woman's Muslim status would be affected since the wife ordinarily took the nationality and status of her husband.

There is ample historical evidence which substantiates the fact that the Islamic law which prohibited Muslim women from marrying Christian men was observed. Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 A.H./1063 A.D.) mentions that when the wife of 'Abāda b. al-Nu'mān al-Taghlibī who was Christian had been converted to the faith of Islam, 'Umar I divorced her from him because the husband refused to become a Muslim.¹ 'Umar I also divorced the grandmother of Yazīd b. 'Alqama from her Christian husband when she became a Muslim.² When the daughter of Ḥaṇḍala b. Bishr married her cousin who was a Christian, 'Umar I said that he should either convert to the faith of Islam or they should be divorced. The man in question preferred his religion to his wife.³ 'Umar II adopted a similar course of action.⁴

On the other hand, marriage between Muslim men and dhimmi women was permitted,⁵ according to Islamic law. Indeed, the Qur'ān says:

1. Al-Muḥalla, (Beirut, n.d.), vol. 7, p. 313.

2. Ibn Ḥazm, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 314.

3. Ibid., vol. 7, p. 313.

4. Ibid., vol. 7, p. 314.

5. Ibn Anas, op. cit., p. 298; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 5, p. 5; al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol. 9, pp. 581-590.

"This day are all things good and pure made lawful unto you ... Lawful unto you in marriage are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book."¹

Many caliphs married Christian women. 'Uthmān married Nā'ila bint al-Farāfṣa, who kept her Christian faith.²

Marriage with Christian women occurred sometimes for sound political reasons as in the case of Mu'āwiya and his son Yazīd who both married Christian women from the Christian Arab tribe, Kalb.³ These marriages probably had some influence on early Umayyad policy towards the Christians under their sway. Their policy was generally tolerant, as discussed elsewhere.

Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245 A.H./859 A.D.) mentions a list of Muslims who were the sons of Christian women, many

1. Sura 5:6.

2. Al-Mudawwana, vol. 2, p. 308; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 263. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 16, p. 322.

On the other hand, 'Iyād b. Ghanam, the governor of the Jazīra (18-20 A.H./639-641 A.D.) wanted to marry a Christian woman from the Jazīra on condition that she became a Muslim but when she refused to renounce her religion and to convert into the faith of Islam, he gave her up. Cf. Ibn A'tham, vol. 1, p. 322.

3. Al-Akḥṭal, p. 172.

of them who lived in the first century A.H.¹ Such a list shows clearly how the Muslims and Christians lived in a united society.

The above information suggests that Muslims had a strong inclination to marry Christian women. Maybe such women appealed to Muslim men because they came from a more educated environment and knew more about cleanliness and good housekeeping. Above all, it would appear that Christian women paid much more attention to their appearance which made them seem more attractive in the eyes of Muslim men than Muslim women. Muslim sources contain some corroboratory evidence on this point. Generally, Taghlibī women were famous for their big breasts and bottoms.² Individual Christian women also excited comment. Nā'ila bint al-Farāfṣa, the widow of 'Uthmān, was so beautiful and had such lovely lips that Mu'āwiya wanted to marry her after the death of her husband, although she had broken her teeth in grief for her husband.³ Her sister was tall and white-skinned and married Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, the governor of Kūfa. When 'Uthmān heard about her attributes, he asked Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ to marry him to her sister.⁴ 'Iyād b. Ghanam, the

1. Al-Muḥabbar, (Hyderabad, 1942), pp. 305-306.

2. Al-Jāhiz, al-Ḥayawān, vol. 1, p. 24.

3. Ibn al-Qayyim, Akhbār al-Nisā', ed. N. Riḍā, (Beirut, 1964), p. 128.

4. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 16, p. 322.

first governor of the Jazīra, wanted to marry a beautiful Christian woman who came to him for help.¹

From the Christian side, the legal position was quite clear. In 57 A.H./676 A.D. the Nestorian Church prohibited Christian women from marrying non-Christians,² or Christians from other sects,³ in order that they should not change their religion and convert into the religion or sect of their husband. Anyone who violated that rule was excommunicated together with their family.⁴ The Monophysites also prohibited Christian women from marrying Muslims.⁵

In reality of course, this prohibition was not observed, because inter-marriage continued between Muslim men and Christian women.⁶ The issue was considered to be important. The Nestorian synod held in 57 A.H./676 A.D. paid much attention to the question of marriage in Christian society. This matter was discussed in three out of twenty items.⁷ A study of these items reveals that the Christian family at this time

1. Ibn A'tham, vol. 1, p. 332.

2. Chabot, op. cit., p. 488.

3. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, pp. 211-212.

4. Ibid., p. 168.

5. Mingana, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 35.

6. Cf. pp. 257-259 above; Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 143; Chabot, op. cit., p. 488.

7. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, pp. 143-144; Chabot, op. cit., pp. 487-489.

was thought to be disunited. Christian women were getting married without the permission of their family or the blessing of the Church.¹ Some Christian women were living with non-Christian men,² and some Christian men married more than one wife. This was of course prohibited according to Christian law.³ Al-Akḥṭal was one of those who had married more than one wife.⁴ He might have been following Muslim custom in this.

Turning now to the important question of food, the fuqahā' who lived in the period covered in this study, including Zayd b. 'Alī⁵ and Malik b. Anas,⁶ had no objection to eating Christian food. They based their judgement on the Qur'ān which says:

"The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them.⁷ Forbidden to you for food are dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah....."⁸

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1. Ibid., p. 487; Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 143.
 2. Ibid., pp. 143-144; Chabot, op. cit., p. 488.
 3. Ibid., p. 489; Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 144.
 4. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 8, p. 289.
 5. Musnad al-Imām Zayd, p. 247.
 6. Al-Mudawwana, vol. 2, p. 607.
 7. Sura 5:6.
 8. Ibid., 5:4.

Though Malik b. Anas disliked slaughter at Christian festivals, he did not object to eating the meat that they offered.¹ Even animals slaughtered at the time of a funeral of a Christian were permissible food for the Muslims.²

On the Christian side, the Nestorian Church prohibited Christians from partaking of the sacrifices of Muslims.³ The Monophysite Church also prohibited its members from doing that. In 65 A.H./684 A.D. Athanasius, the Patriarch of Antioch, circulated a letter in which he pronounced that it was forbidden for the Monophysites to partake of the sacrifices of Muslims.⁴

As for animals slaughtered by Arab Christian tribes; there is some evidence that early fuqahā' ruled that the slaughtered meat of the Arab Christian tribes was not lawful for the Muslims. Al-Ṭabarī reports the following statement attributed to 'Umar I:

"The Arab Christians are not among the People of the Book so what they slaughter is not lawful unto us...."⁵

1. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 67.

2. Al-Bukhārī, al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, (Hyderabad, 1959), vol. 1, part 2, p. 214; al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol. 9, p. 579.

3. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 127.

4. Mingana, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 34-35.

5. Ikhtilāf, pp. 230-231; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 2, p. 196.

Al-Ṭabarī also reports three sayings attributed to 'Alī which rule that what the Christians of the Banu Taghlib slaughtered should not be eaten:

1. "Do not eat what Taghlib, the Arab Christian (tribe) have slaughtered; they adhere to wine-drinking because of their Christian belief."
2. "Do not eat what Taghlib, the Arab Christian (tribe) have slaughtered; from their Christian belief, they have retained only wine drinking."
3. "Do not eat what Taghlib the Arab Christian (tribe) have slaughtered; from their religion they have kept nothing but wine-drinking."¹

If these accounts are true, they would tend to suggest that 'Umar I and 'Alī may have been prompted by political considerations in holding this view. Namely, they wanted to boycott Taghlib and the other Arab Christian tribes in order to force them to embrace the faith of Islam.

On the other hand, there are a number of early fūqahā' who differed on this point and permitted Muslims to eat the meat slaughtered by Taghlib, the Christian Arab tribe. Such fūqahā' include 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbās²

1. Tafsīr, vol. 9, p. 575. Cf. al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 2, p. 196.
2. Al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. 9, p. 573. Al-Zamakhsharī, Sharḥ al-Kashshāf, (Beirut, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 607.

(d. 68 A.H./687 A.D.), al-Sha'bī (d. 104 A.H./722 A.D.), Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94 A.H./712 A.D.) and al-Ḥaṣan al-Baṣrī¹ (d. 110 A.H./687 A.D.)

There is very little information about the clothes worn by the Christians in the early Islamic period. Islamic sources provide some information about the dress of monks and nuns. These garments are as follows:

1. al-Mish² which is a garment of thick, coarse hair cloth.³
2. al-Madra'a,⁴ which is a tunic, made of wool and

1. Al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. 9, pp. 573-574.

There are two very interesting anecdotes relevant to this topic. The first account relates that when 'Alī entered the Jazīra on his way to Ṣiffīn, Taghlib and al-Namr b. Qāsiṭ met him with many slaughtered sheep and 'Alī ordered one of his leaders to eat and drink what they offered. The second account states that 'Alī always had his lunch and supper with a priest from al-Raqqā who became his friend and used to come down from his hermitage to see 'Alī. Cf. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, op. cit., p. 146; Ibn Abi 'l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, ed. M. Abu 'l-Faḍl, (Cairo, 1965), vol. 3, p. 205.

2. Al-Ṣāwī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 321.
3. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 223 (art:- Masaḥa).
4. Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, ed. A.A. al-Ghazālī, (Cairo, 1953), p. 121.

- and having sleeves.¹
3. al-Burnuṣ,² which is a garment with a hood attached to it.
 4. al-Qalansuwa,³ which is an item worn upon the head; a tall headgear.
 5. al-Na'āl,⁴ a slipper.
 6. al-Qinā'. This was a veil worn by nuns only.⁵

Information about the dress of secular Christians in the early Islamic period is very scanty. Abu 'l-Faraj relates that al-Akhṭal wore a silk jubba, an amulet and a gold cross hanging from his neck on a gold chain.⁶ Abū Tammām mentions that the Banu Taghlib wore al-burnuṣ.⁷ The Taghlibī women wore woollen garments which were generally striped in white and black colours. They also put on earrings.⁸

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1. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 325 (art:- Dara'a).
 2. Al-Ṣāwī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 576.
 3. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 231 (art:- Qalasa).
 4. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 2, p. 174.
 5. P. Ḥaddād, al-Rahbanāt al-Nisā'iyya, (Baghdad, 1972), p. 43.
 6. Vol. 8, p. 299.
 7. Op. cit., p. 208; al-Jāhiz, al-Ḥayawān, vol. 4, p. 24.
 8. Abū 'Ubayd Ma'amar b. al-Muthanna, Naqā'id Jarīr wa'l-Farazdaq, (Leiden, 1908), vol. 1, pp. 808-809.

Some Islamic sources relate that 'Umar II issued a decree that the Christians should not wear certain clothes, nor should they let their hair grow long or use a riding saddle. According to Abū Yūsuf, 'Umar II ordered that Christian women "should not be allowed to use a riding saddle but only a pack saddle. They must not wear the quba'a and must not let their hair grow long."¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam writes that 'Umar II "ordered the Christians to wear bells and to cut their hair short in front. He forbade them to appear in public unless they had cut their hair short on the forehead and wore a veil thrown over the turban, trousers of a special cut, sandals with straps and were riding without saddles....."² Abū 'Ubayd states that 'Umar II ordered the Christians "to cut their hair in front and to divide their forelock."³ These details are corroborated in Christian sources. Michael the Syrian states that 'Umar II "ordered the Christians not to put on a turban and not to use a riding saddle."⁴ Bar-Hebraeus states that 'Umar II order the Christians "not to put on apparel which in anyway resembled that of the soldiers and that they were not to use saddles when riding."⁵

1. P. 73.

2. Op. cit., p. 159.

3. P. 75.

4. Vol. 2, p. 456.

5. Chronography, vol. 1, p. 108.

It is quite likely that such orders as these were issued by 'Umar II. Indeed, they would appear to spring naturally from the historical circumstances of the time. The disgrace which came upon the Muslims through their withdrawal from Constantinople in 100 A.H./717 A.D. aroused great hatred in the heart of 'Umar II against the Christians within the empire,¹ whom he may well have suspected of being spies for the Byzantines. Among those who were accused of spying at this time was John of Damascus.² In such a situation, it is not unlikely that 'Umar II ordered the above-mentioned restrictions on the dhimmīs in order to differentiate the dress of the Christians from that of the Muslims. Such an action would accord with a policy by which 'Umar II, realising how the Muslims had severely criticised previous Umayyad caliphs, now attempted to restore the position of his family by a fanatical anti-Christian religious policy.³

It should be noted, however, that neither al-Ṭabarī nor al-Balādhurī mention anything about any orders issued by 'Umar II about the dress of the dhimmīs.⁴

1. Theophanes, op. cit., p. 613 (A.M. 6210);

Chronography, p. 108.

2. Rustam, Ḥarb fi'l-Kanā'is, p. 26.

3. Nājjī, op. cit., pp. 169-179.

4. It is interesting to note that the peace treaty made in 89 A.H./707 A.D. with al-Jarājima who were Christians imposed on them the wearing of Muslim /

Turning now to the places of worship of Christians and Muslims, it would appear that in some situations both religions may well have shared the same building. According to al-Balādhurī, the Muslims made a treaty with the people of Hīt, retaining one half of the church in the city.¹ In Ḥimṣ the Muslims seized a quarter of

/Muslim dress. Al-Jarājima were Christians who lived in Jabal al-Lukām (Amanus), near Antioch. At the time of the Islamic conquest of Syria, al-Jarājima made a peace treaty with the Muslims according to which they agreed to act as helpers and spies to the Muslims. They were to keep any booty for themselves and to pay no tax. Sometimes they acted in accordance with the treaty and at other times they were on friendly terms with the Byzantines. In 89 A.H./707 A.D. Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik conquered them and made a peace treaty with them, according to which they had the right to go wherever they wanted to go in Syria, they had the right to receive from the Bayt al-Māl 8 dīnārs for each of them and food for their families, and to pay no jizya and no tax on their trade. In return for that they had to wear Muslim dress. Cf. al-Balādhurī, pp. 159-161.

1. P. 179.

the Church of St. John.¹ In such a situation it may well be that there was some contact between the adherents of the two faiths.

There is an abundance of historical evidence to show that in early Islamic times Christians could go into the mosque freely. Al-Akhṭal, a Christian poet, acted as arbitrator for the Muslim tribe Bakr b. Wā'il apparently more than once and performed his duty in the mosque.² Abū Zubayd the Tā'ī Christian poet also entered the mosque.³

The early fuqahā' respected Christian places of worship and they even declared it possible for the Muslims to pray in churches or convents. Zayd b. 'Alī said, "Pray in the church and do not worry...."⁴ Al-Sha'bī concurred in this.⁵

In the administration of justice the Christians had the right to ask their leaders to act as arbitrators amongst them, but they could also ask a qāḍī to perform this task. Instances of this did occur but in such cases

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1. P. 131. Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, op. cit., p. 162; al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., p. 156.
 2. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 8, p. 303.
 3. Ibid., vol. 5, p. 135; Ansāb, vol. 5, p. 31.
 4. Al-Baghdādī, Majmu' al-Fiqh, (Milan, 1919), vol. 2, p. 84.
 5. Abū Ḥayyān al-Ṭawḥīdī, al-Imtā' wa'l-Mu'ānasa, ed. A. Amīn, (Beirut, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 58.

the qādī judged according to Islamic law.¹ Al-Kindī relates that in 120 A.H./738 A.D., the qādī of Egypt, Khayr b. Na'im sat on the steps of the mosque of Cairo to deal with cases of Christians.² According to the available sources a qādī could arbitrate among the Christians in all legal matters except cases of usury.³ On the Christian side, the synod held in 57 A.H./676 A.D. prohibited the Nestorian Christians from asking a qādī to be their arbitrator and threatened everyone who did so with excommunication from the church.⁴

According to Islamic law, Christians should never be accepted as witnesses against Muslims. Some fuqahā' accepted a Christian as witness for a Muslim who died suddenly on a journey.⁵ They based this judgement on the Qur'ānic injunction:

"Ye who believe! When death approaches any of you, (take) witnesses among yourselves when making bequests, -

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1. Sura 5:45; Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 389-390; Abū Dā'ūd, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 412.
 2. Op. cit., p. 351.
 3. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 368-369.
 4. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, p. 141; Chabot, op. cit., p. 484.
 5. Wakī', Akhbār al-quḍāt, ed. A.A. Muṣṭafa, (Cairo, 1947), vol. 2, p. 281.

two just men of your own (brotherhood)
or others from outside if you are
journeying through the earth."¹

Amongst the early fuqahā' who accepted dhimmis as witnesses for Muslims were Abū Musā al-Ash'arī² (d. 44 A.H./664 A.D.) and Abū Hanīfa³ (d. 150 A.H./767 A.D.). On the other hand, Ibn Anas⁴ and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq⁵ (d. 148 A.H./765 A.D.) prohibited this.

It is interesting to note that Theophanes⁶ and Michael⁷ the Syrian state that 'Umar II was the first

1. Sura 5:109.

2. Abū Dā'ūd, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 417. This source reports that a Muslim died in Dāqūqā near Baghdad. Before his death he could not find a Muslim to witness his waṣīyya, so he made two dhimmī men witnesses. Those men went to Kūfa and told Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī who was the qādī of the city, about the waṣīyya of the dead Muslim. Al-Ash'arī made them swear to the waṣīyya of the dead Muslim and accepted them as lawful witnesses. Ibid.

3. B.M. Fahd, "Tārīkh al-Shuhūd", Majallat Kulliyat al-Sharī'a, (Baghdad, 1967), p. 42.

4. Op. cit., vol. 5, p. 156.

5. Al-Ḥur al-'Āmilī, al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimma Fī Fiqh Uṣūl al-Ai'mma, (Najaf, 1378 A.H.), p. 387.

6. Op. cit., p. 614.

7. Vol. 2, p. 456.

caliph who gave orders that Christians should not be accepted as witnesses against Muslims. This suggests that before the time of 'Umar II, Christians were allowed to be witnesses for the Muslims.

According to Shurayh¹ al-qādī (d. 80 A.H./699 A.D.) al-Sha'bī,² Ja'far al-Sādiq³ and Abū Hanīfa,⁴ the dhimmīs could give evidence in Islamic courts against one another. According to al-Kindī, Khayr b. Na'im the qādī of Egypt (120-137 A.H./738-754 A.D.) accepted the dhimmī evidence against one another after asking about their honesty among the people of their religion.⁵ On the other hand, Mālik b. Anas,⁶ al-Shāfi'ī⁷ and Ibn Abī Layla⁸ (d. 148 A.H./765 A.D.) did not permit this.

As for the oath of dhimmī witnesses in Islamic courts, some early fuqahā' suggested that the dhimmī

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1. Wakī', op. cit., vol. 2, p. 271.
 2. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 415.
 3. M.J. Maghniyya, Fiqh al-Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq, (Beirut, n.d.), p. 149.
 4. Abū Hanīfa, al-Fatāwī al-Khayriyya, (Būlāq, 1300 A.H.) 2nd ed. vol. 2, p. 27; Abū Yūsuf, Ikhtilāf Abī Hanīfa wa Ibn Abī Layla, (Cairo, 1938), ed. A.W. al-Afghānī, p. 73.
 5. Op. cit., p. 351.
 6. Op. cit., vol. 5, p. 157.
 7. Op. cit., vol. 7, pp. 38-39.
 8. Abū Yūsuf, op. cit., p. 73.

witnesses should swear in the name of Allah. Such fuqahā' included Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, Masrūq (d. 63 A.H./ 682 A.D.) and Mālik b. Anas.¹ On the other hand, al-Sha'bī ordered that a Christian in taking an oath had to be taken to his church and had to swear by what the people of his religion swore.²

As for trade, Mālik b. Anas permitted co-operation in trade between the Muslims and the Christians but he insisted that the Muslims should be in charge.³ Moreover, he disliked the existence of Christian merchants in shops belonging to Muslims because the Christians used to lend money at high interest⁴ (usury). On the other hand, Abū Hanīfa and Abū Yūsuf permitted the existence of Christian merchants in shops belonging to Muslims.⁵

Whatever the formal legal position of the Christians may have been in the early Islamic period, in reality it was clear that the Christians had a monopoly of most posts in the civil administration⁶ and

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1. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 200-201.
 2. Wakī', op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 415-416. Cf. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 201.
 3. Al-Mudawwana, vol. 5, p. 70; vol. 4, p. 51.
 4. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 403.
 5. Al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf, p. 236.
 6. Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 5, p. 523; vol. 6, p. 180; al-Jahshiyārī, op. cit., pp. 31-61; Ansāb, vol. 4, part 2, p. 109; al-Ṣūlī, op. cit., p. 192; al-Māwardī, op. cit., p. 197.

that they considered themselves socially and culturally superior to the Muslims. This caused a good deal of jealousy among the Muslims towards the Christians. This was one of the reasons that made 'Abd al-Malik try to replace Christians with Muslims¹ in administrative posts. Such a change did not prove successful because the Muslims did not have enough knowledge and experience.² 'Umar II noticed that previous Umayyad caliphs had admitted Christians as scribes in their various provinces. Playing on the jealousy this created amongst the Muslims, 'Umar II ordered his governors to forbid the employment of the "People of the Book".³

In spite of what has been mentioned above, the Muslims and Christians in the Umayyad period and earlier greeted each other, showing mutual friendship.⁴ Al-Sha'bī suggested that Christians should be greeted with the words: "The peace and mercy of Allah be on you."⁵

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1. Al-Balādhurī, pp. 193, 300; al-Jahshiyārī, op. cit., p. 40; al-Ṣūlī, op. cit., p. 192.
 2. Al-Māwardī, op. cit.; Kremer, op. cit., p. 129. (appendix); al-Jahshiyārī, op. cit., p. 61.
 3. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, op. cit., p. 58; Ibn al-Jawzī, op. cit., p. 100; Aḥmad al-Ibshīhī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 153.
 4. Abū Yūsuf, p. 133.
 5. Abū Nu'aym, Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allah al-Iṣbahānī, Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 314; /

Muslims sometimes called Christians brothers.¹ This good relationship between the Christians and the Muslims made some Muslims show an interest in Christianity² and encouraged some Christians on occasion to help poor Muslims and lend them money.³ On the other hand, in Islamic law it was not thought lawful for Muslims to borrow money from Christians⁴ or to lend Christians money.⁵

So much for the situation in the cities and villages. As far as the tribes were concerned, blood ties transcended religious affiliations, be they Christian or Muslim. The Banu Taghlib enjoyed a good relationship with its branches in Adharbayjān and with al-Namr b. Qāsiṭ and Banu Shaybān in the Jazīra. These other tribes, though they were Muslims, offered help to the Banu Taghlib in their fighting against the Banu Qays.⁶ Bakr, a Muslim tribe in Iraq, gave economic help to the Banu Taghlib in the Jazīra,

/al-'Askarī, Dīwān al-Ma'ānī, (Cairo, 1933), vol. 2, p. 218.

1. Al-Jumahī, op. cit., p. 422.
2. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 8, p. 305.
3. Al-Akḥṭal, p. 222.
4. Ibn Anas, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 107-108.
5. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 51.
6. Cf. chapter III, p. 134.

to whom they were related, by paying blood money.¹ This kind of information suggests that neither Islam nor Christianity could break down tribal traditions and that tribalism was stronger than both Islam and Christianity.

The Banu Taghlib were amongst those Christians who were especially praised. They were considered to be more virtuous than all other Arabs, and to be very brave warriors.² So the Arabs called them al-ghulabā' ("very great in war" or "highly respected tribes").³

It should be added, however, that attitudes towards the Banu Taghlib were not always favourable. There were some incidents in which Muslim tribes or individuals attacked the Banu Taghlib or considered them as their enemies. Some Muslims tried to depreciate their value in Arab society by abusing them as being non-Arabs,⁴ and by accusing their language of being unpure.⁵ Moreover, the Banu Taghlib men were accused of having sexual

1. Abu 'l-Faraj, vol. 8, pp. 310-312.

2. Abū 'Ubayd Ma'mar, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 880; Ibn Abd Rabbihi, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 329.

3. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 414 (art:- ghalaba).

4. Al-Jāhīz, al-Ḥayawān, vol. 4, p. 24; idem, al-Bayān wa'l-Tabyīn, (Cairo, 1968), vol. 1, p. 40.

5. Al-Zabīdī, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 234 (art:- Kasa); Ibn Manẓūr, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 80 (art:- Kasa); Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 295.

relations with their wives while they were menstruating.¹ They were also criticised because they drank wine, ate pork, worshipped the cross² and were very miserly.³

It is interesting to note that certain pagan traditions retained by the Christians until 57 A.H./676 A.D. and criticised by the Nestorian synod held in that year are corroborated by evidence from Muslim sources. Such practices included burying the dead with their best clothes on, lamenting and weeping over the dead and spending a lot of money on burial ceremonies.⁴ The Muslims discovered some corpses clad in excellent clothes in al-Madā'in. They also found money buried with the dead.⁵ The poet Jarīr (d. 114 A.H./732 A.D.) in lampooning al-Akhṭal, mentioned Christians crying and weeping over the dead.⁶

According to the peace treaties, Islam guaranteed the lives of the Christians and their religion. Special provisions were made in Islamic law to protect Christians' property. Muslim lawyers cited a saying attributed to

1. Al-Ṣāwī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 316.

2. Ibid., pp. 21, 53, 111, 450, 576-577.

3. Ibid., p. 260; Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 210 and vol. 6, pp. 123, 151.

4. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, vol. 1, pp. 144-145; Chabot, op. cit., pp. 489-490.

5. F. Khūrshīd, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, (Shimara, 1959), p. 60.

6. Al-Ṣāwī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 304.

'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib: "Their possessions are like our possessions."¹ Moreover, Islam insured the Christians against poverty. 'Umar I ordered his treasury officials to look after the blind and the old men of the People of the Book, and to pay them allowances from the treasury. He is reported to have told his treasury officials, "The ṣadaqa is for the poor and the destitute; the poor refers to the People of the Book."² He is also reported to have ordered that lepers should be given money from the ṣadaqa.³ Similar provisions were also apparently made by 'Umar II.⁴

According to Islamic law, in the punishment for crimes there was no discrimination between Muslims and Christians. If a Christian was killed by a Muslim the latter would suffer the same penalty. Indeed, the Prophet himself killed a Muslim because the latter had killed a dhimmī.⁵ A similar action is attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib⁶ who is reported to have said: "Their

1. Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 8, pp. 445, 535; cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ikhtilāf, p. 205.

2. Abū Yūsuf, p. 72; al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol. 14, p. 308.

3. Al-Balādhurī, p. 129.

4. Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 380.

5. Al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 7, pp. 290-291; cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 33.

6. Al-Sindī, M. 'Ābid, Tartīb Musnad al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī ed. Y.A. al-Hassanī, (Cairo, 1951), vol. 2, p. 105.

blood is the same as ours."¹ 'Umar II ordered the killing of a Muslim for killing a dhimmī² and wrote to all his governors: "Do not kill a monk or a peasant."³

On the other hand, there was a difference in the levels of blood money assessed on Muslims and Christians. At the time of the Prophet the blood money of the Muslim was assessed at 800 dīnārs, whilst the amount payable for the dhimmī was half this sum. 'Umar I valued the blood money of the Muslim at 1,000 dīnārs and that of the dhimmī at 400 dīnārs.⁴ Both 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr and 'Umar II apparently followed the same line as 'Umar I,⁵ whilst Malik b. Anas⁶ and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq⁷ conformed to the amounts used at the time of the Prophet. Later on, al-Shāfi'ī demanded that the blood money of the dhimmī

1. Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 8, pp. 445, 535.

2. Abu Ḥanīfa, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 180; al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 7, p. 290.

3. Ibn Ādam, p. 46.

4. Abū Dā'ūd, op. cit., vol. 4, pp. 256-257, 270.

On the other hand, al-Zuhrī (d. 124 A.H./742 A.D.) suggests that the same amount was due for the dhimmī as for the Muslim. See al-Shāfi'ī, vol. 7, p. 291.

5. Abū Dā'ūd, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 270 (no. 4583); al-Zarqānī, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 191.

6. Op. cit., vol. 6, p. 395.

7. Al-Ḥur al-'Āmilī, op. cit., p. 392.

be one third of the blood money of the Muslim.¹ On the other hand, Abū Hanīfa² demanded the same amount for the dhimmī as for a Muslim.

According to al-Ṭabarī³ and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a,⁴ Mu'āwīya ordered Khālīd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khālīd b. al-Walīd to pay 12,000 dirhams as blood money for Ibn Uthāl,⁵ the private Christian doctor of Mu'āwīya. Mu'āwīya kept half of this amount for himself and paid the second half to the Bayt al-Māl.⁶ This custom of the blood money of the dhimmī remained till the reign of 'Umar II who abolished the share of the caliph and

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1. Op. cit., vol. 7, p. 292.
 2. 'Uqūd al-Jawāhir, (Alexandria, 1292 A.H.), ed. M.M. al-Ḥusaynī, vol. 2, pp. 197-198; al-Shāfi'ī, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 290; Zaydān, 'Abd al-Karīm, Aḥkām al-dhimmiyīn wa'l-musta'minīn, (Baghdad, 1976), p. 283.
 3. Vol. 5, p. 228.
 4. 'Uyūn al-Anbā', (Beirut, 1957), vol. 2, p. 26.
 5. Khālīd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān killed Ibn Uthāl because the latter had poisoned the father of the former by the order of Mu'āwīya, for Mu'āwīya thought that 'Abd al-Raḥmān might well be a rival of his son Yazīd. Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 26; al-Ṭabarī, vol. 5, pp. 227-228.
 6. Ibid.; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 26.

approved the share of the Bayt al-Māl.¹

A dhimmī in partnership with a Muslim enjoyed the same pre-emption rights as his partner the Muslim. The same was true if a dhimmī was a neighbour of a Muslim.² Shurayh gave judgement in favour of a Christian and gave him the right of pre-emption,³ so did 'Umar II.⁴

As regards inheritance laws, the Rightly Guided Caliphs followed the policy embodied in a tradition from the Prophet:

"The people of the two religions are not

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1. Ibid. Tritton comments on this even by saying:

"The only solution that can be offered is this: at first full blood money was paid and the treasury took half, for Mu'āwīa made no distinction between his private purse and the public treasury. Then the government waived its rights, and the relatives still got their half. The lawyers accepted this custom, and formulated the rule that the blood money for a dhimmī was half that for a Muslim."

Op. cit., p. 180.

2. Al-Nawawī, al-Majmū', (Cairo, n.d.), ed. A. Yūsuf, vol. 14, p. 142.
3. Wakī', op. cit., vol. 2, p. 389.
4. Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 366.

allowed to inherit from one another."¹

Mu'āwīya however, allowed Muslims to inherit from Christians whilst depriving Christians of their right to inherit from Muslims.² 'Umar II and Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik followed the policy of the Prophet while Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik followed Mu'āwīya's approach.³

The position of the Christians within Islamic law can therefore be seen to be one of generally fair treatment. The books of law reflect in their provisions a certain ease of contact and a good relationship enjoyed by Christians with Muslims. Islamic law provided security and protection for the Christians within the umma and it is likely that they were usually treated more sympathetically than they had been in the pre-Islamic period under oppressive regimes.

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1. Abū Dā'ūd, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 173; Ibn Ḥanbal, op. cit., vol. 10, p. 146, also vol. 11, p. 82; al-Baghdādī, al-Majmū' al-Ṣafawī, vol. 6, p. 256.
 2. Ansāb, vol. 4, part I, p. 204; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa'l-Nihāya, (Cairo, 1932), vol. 9, p. 231.
Cf. Ibn Qudāma, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 294.
 3. Unknown historian, Tārīkh al-Khulafā', p. 143; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. 9, p. 231.

CONCLUSION

Christianity probably spread to the Jazīra in the first century A.D. The Christians of the Jazīra who belonged to three sects, the Malkites, Jacobites and Nestorians, were in constant conflict. They also suffered from the interference of the Byzantines and the Persians in their religious affairs.

In 18 A.H./639 A.D. the Muslims conquered the Jazīra and although the Christians there resisted them, the Muslims managed to overcome them. The Muslims guaranteed the Christians their life, religion and possessions and non-interference in their religious affairs. The Islamic conquest of the Jazīra was a relief for the Christians from the constant war between the two empires and their interference in their religious affairs.

For political considerations, the Muslims treated the Arab Christian tribe, Banu Taghlib, in a special way which helped them to maintain their Christian faith until the end of the third century A.H./9th century A.D.

Generally, the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the first Umayyad caliphs favoured the Christians and employed them in important posts, while the later Umayyad caliphs' treatment of the Christians was less consistent and depended on the circumstances.

The Christians played a highly significant part in the economic life of Islam; they were landlords, peasantry, keepers of animals, industrialists, traders and craftsmen.

By the efforts of the above-mentioned social classes, the Jazīra exported various goods to different areas of the umma. They also paid various taxes to the Bayt al-Māl, so they were an established and powerful element in Islamic society during the period covered in this research.

Some governors of the Jazīra imposed too many taxes on the Christians of which 'Umar II tried to relieve them. Soon after his death, however, his reforms were discarded and the Christians remained in less than favourable economic conditions until the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd who also tried to relieve them.

Generally, the Christians and the Muslims lived well together and in harmony in spite of the attempts of the clergy of both sides who tried to erect barriers between them.

It would appear that no Muslim governor ever attempted to exterminate the Christians and there were very few attempts to convert them to Islam by force.

APPENDICES

The letter of the King of Edessa, Abgar, to Jesus:

"Abgar Uchama, the Toparch, to Jesus the good Saviour who has appeared in the district of Jerusalem, greeting . I have heard concerning you and your cures, how they have been accomplished by you without drugs and herbs. For, as the story goes, you make the blind recover their sight, the lame walk, you cleanse lepers, cast out unclean spirits and demons, you cure those who are tortured by long disease and you raise dead men. And when I heard all these things concerning you, I decided that it is one of the two, either that you are God, and that you came down from heaven to do these things, or that you are a son of God for doing these things. For this reason I write to beg you to hasten to me and to heal the suffering which I have. Moreover, I have heard that the Jews are mocking you, and wish to ill-treat you. Now I have a city very small and venerable which is enough for us both."

1. Eusebius, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 89.

The reply from Jesus to Abgar:

"Blessed are you who believed in me not having seen me, for it is written concerning me that those who have seen me will not believe in me, and that those who have not seen me will believe and live. Now concerning what you wrote to me, to come to you, I must first complete here all for which I was sent, and after thus completing it to be taken up to him who sent me, and when I have been taken up, I will send to you one of my disciples to heal your suffering, and give life to you and those with you."¹

According to the Doctrine of Addaeus, Jesus included in the letter the following promise: "The city in which you dwell shall be blessed, and the enemy shall not prevail against it forever."²

The authenticity of the above-mentioned letters is highly suspect. The earliest known mention of this incident occurs in the time of Eusebius (d. 339 A.D.) yet it is unlikely that this particular piece of evidence about the correspondence between Jesus and Abgar at such an early period would have been ignored by Christian writers for nearly 300 years until Eusebius

1. Eusebius, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

2. Cureton, op. cit., p. 10.

discovered them.¹ Eusebius supposed them to be of some antiquity. As for the historians who came after Eusebius, they do not quote the text of any correspondence between Jesus and Abgar but they do make references to the incident itself.² Only Eusebius quotes this correspondence.

B.H. Cowper argues that it is utterly incredible that a pagan king should have written "such a pious and generally scriptural letter as that ascribed to Abgar." Its conclusion is peculiarly feeble: "Now I have a city, small and venerable, which is enough for both." Cowper further argues that the tone and phraseology show that it is the work of someone who failed because he could not throw himself into the true position of a heathen.³

Jesus' letter is also equally questionable at its face value. As Cowper says, it embodies a phrase of Scripture at the outset: "Blessed art thou who didst believe in me not having seen me." It then goes on to quote as Scripture what only bears a very distant resemblance to any portion of Scripture: "For it is written concerning me that those who have seen me will

1. Segal, Edessa, pp. 64-65.

2. Joshua the Stylite, op. cit., pp. 5, 26, 51-2;
Evagrius, op. cit., pp. 218-19.

3. "Cureton's Ancient Documents" in The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record, vol. VII, new series, (London, 1965), p. 179.

not believe in me." When did Christ ever quote Scripture so inaccurately? The words "I must first complete here all for which I was sent" are a clear echo of Matt. iii.15,¹ as the opening evokes John xx.29.² The words "And when I have been taken up, I will send to you one of my disciples to heal your suffering and give life to you and those with you" implying that Jesus should defer Abgar's cure till someone could be sent after the ascension are, according to Cowper, a peculiarly infelicitous idea and not in accordance with the practice or character of Christ.³ One can only agree with Cowper when he concludes, what would not be given for one genuine letter written by Christ?⁴

It may therefore be concluded that the correspondence between Christ and Abgar is in all probability a forgery, and that it is a product of the third century. As such it belongs to the veritable apocrypha which sprang up then and earlier in such numbers. Nevertheless, Addaeus may well have been at Edessa in the reign of Abgar because the holy apostles and disciples of Christ

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1. Cf. The New Testament for English Readers, vol. 1, part 1, (London, 1863), p. 16.
 2. Ibid., vol. 1, part 2, p. 293.
 3. Op. cit., p. 179. Cf. Cureton, op. cit., p. 152.
 4. Op. cit., p. 179.

were scattered to different countries. Syriac manuscripts relate that Addaeus was preaching in Edessa and the Jazīra. Such works include: "a chapter from the teaching of Apostle Addaī in Edessa";¹ "Addaī in Edessa"² and "The Doctrine of Addaeus the Apostle."³

1. Mingana, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 726.

2. Ibid., p. 180.

3. Cureton, op. cit., pp. 6-23.

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